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Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CONTRACTED SECURITY OFFICERS'  
RETENTION

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organization Change

by

Gerardo de los Santos Lozano

April, 2012

Daphne DePorres, Ed.D – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## VITA

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| 1978-1987 | PROLEC, Monterrey Mexico. An electric transformer manufacturing plant. Started working as a Plant Engineer and ended as Human Development Manager.   |
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## ABSTRACT

One of the characteristics of the contracted or outsourced security officers' industry is its high turnover rate. The objective of this qualitative study was to explore some of the factors that contribute to security officer's permanence in their employing organizations. The study took place in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. Eight security officers with more than a year's tenure, employed with 4 different companies, voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. The results of the study show that security officers who experienced good treatment, support, and care about their personal and family needs from owners, executives and supervisors, tended to continue working with their employer. Security officers also found meaning in their positions as they felt that their work contributed to their companies' and clients' wellbeing. The results also show that the security officers enjoy helping others through their positions, and that they perceive that their job contributes to their personal development and learning; they also feel they have good prospects for the future. These factors were found to contribute to the security officers' job satisfaction and commitment to their companies, and impacted their decision to continue their employment with these companies. The conclusion presents recommendations that could enhance employee retention.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study**

### **Overview of the Study**

In today's business world where reducing costs, improving quality of products and services, making profits and creating knowledge seem to be a common denominator, there is an issue that could prevent organizations from achieving these objectives: employee retention.

Retention and its counterpart, turnover, have been largely studied by academics and organizational researchers in order to better understand their causes, consequences and ways to reduce the former or increase the latter. Despite that, high turnover rates are still characteristic of some industries such as fast food, truck drivers and security officers. These industries, in some cases, register an annual turnover rate of over 100% (Bitzer, 2006; Goodboe, 2002; Kilcarr, 2007; Orlov, 2006; Zuber, 1997).

This research is directed at the security officer's industry, more specifically to the outsourced security officer field, where little, if any, formal research has been completed and published regarding the reasons why it has such a high turnover rate.

Annual turnover rate is a measure used in management to know the percentage of people who in a year leave a job or organization (Cummings & Worley, 2001). A 100% turnover rate, for instance, means that in a one year period all the workforce within a given position or company has changed. A higher turnover rate means that in a year the total workforce changes more than once.

This study focuses in retention; it is intended to identify some key issues about why outsourced security officers stay in their jobs for periods of time longer than a year. And, we want to understand why the target population is composed of people who are still in their positions.

Later in this chapter, an explanation will be presented of the benefits of conducting studies with people who stay in an organization, rather than studying the ones who have left.

### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter presents the research proposal and is divided into three sections. Section I is written to provide descriptive elements so the reader can get an overall understanding of the proposal. At the beginning, some facts about the author are mentioned. This information is included in order to show how his experience in the outsourcing security officers' sector has created a solid foundation for his proposal and the research design.

Then, in order to acquaint the reader with some practical information, an overview of the following is presented: outsourcing, the security officer's position, security officer outsourcing (SOO), and security officers' outsourcing companies (SOOC). These companies are the ones providing the field where the research took place.

Section II contains the focus of the research, problem statement, purpose and significance of the study.

Section III delves into the conceptual approach, then some definitions of terms are presented, in addition to the proposed research methodology.

Before progressing further, it is worthwhile to explain some differences about identifying, describing and naming the security officer's position. The term *officer* says Canton (1996), tends to be applied to the best people in the industry. In his writings he opts to use the term *guard* even though it is very well understood that it connotes a lesser status based in antique roots.

On the other hand Ighagbon (1983) mentions that although both terms mean and represent the same occupation, the name *security officer* is a more dignified title for the position, which is also sometimes known as *protection officer*. Within this work the word *guard* is only used when directly quoting a source, otherwise it will appear as *officer*, because the author's own criteria supports the idea of dignifying the position.

Also, it seems convenient to include the definitions here of some terms that are going to be used during the study.

### **Definition of Terms**

Security Officer: A non-police person employed in private or public security who works protecting life and property. S/he is thus taking care of properties and their assets (people, money, information, et cetera) on private or public facilities, either from a fixed location or in the capacity of a patrol officer (International Foundation for Protection Officers, 2003).

For the scope of this research, this position is considered the lowest level in the organizational chain of command in a traditional security officer organization. It implies not having any subordinates or responsibilities managing people.



Contracted Security Officer: S/he is any individual hired by a company that sells protection services to others. Her/his duties are similar to the ones cited in the above definition. The individual reports to the SOOC and looks there for guidance, training and payment, and in many cases even wears uniforms provided by the SOOC.

These individuals owe allegiance in the first place to the SOOC that hires them and in second place to the end user or client of the contracted service (Canton, 2003; Coverston, 1986).

Proprietary or Internal Security Officer: A person who performs the duties described before, but is employed by a person, a business owner, an organization, or any other entity to work directly for them in the security field (Canton, 2003; Coverston, 1986).

Security Officer Outsourcing Companies (SOOC's): Those companies that contract with businesses, industries and other entities to perform a number of security duties by means of an established contract. They hire, train, and are responsible for all the human resources issues of their employees, no matter which position they are assigned to.

## **Section I**

**The opportunity and the background of the researcher.** The researcher has been working for more than 20 years as an owner manager of a SOOC in northeastern Mexico. The SOOC currently has four branch offices located in different cities of the region with headquarters in the City of Monterrey,

Nuevo Leon (NL). During this time the author has experienced diverse economic cycles in a market, which has influenced his company's performance.

In the course of business he has won and lost large and small contracts. He has hired, managed, and laid off or fired hundreds of people. Therefore, in this context, he has had the chance to experience and acquire a good understanding of the security officer's world. With this inside knowledge of the security officers' industry, the researcher has noticed that even in periods when job offers in the market are low, many people who work as outsourced security officers only remain in their employing organizations for short periods of time.

As it was formerly stated in this work, the security officer industry has a turn-over rate that ranges from 100% to 300% (Bitzer, 2006; Goodboe, 2002; Orlov, 2006; Zuber, 2007). This means that most officers leave their job within a year and sometimes within four months. This is hardly time enough to develop any expertise in their post before they leave.

Nevertheless, there are some people who stay in their companies for longer periods of time, despite the fact that in outsourcing relationships wages and benefits tend to be lower, especially fringe benefits, to those in traditional work relationships (Pearce, 1993).

Although it would seem that through experience the researcher would have some clues about the reasons why some security officers act as mentioned above, his interest is to formally explore the SOO field and try to reduce the absence of formal research on the matter in Mexico as well as in other parts of

the world. His rationale to carry out this work is not only the intent to solve a problem, but also to contribute new knowledge regarding the SOO field.

This research was conducted in Monterrey, NL, Mexico. The goal is to get information not only from officers who work for the researcher's company, but to include other companies as well. Monterrey's market was selected as the target because this city plays an important role in Mexico's economy and the city is also headquarters for many SOOC's.

**Outsourcing.** Currently, organizations throughout the world are experiencing the challenge of survival in an uncertain future embedded in a world driven by a technological revolution. Business organizations are facing increasingly competitive markets that are forcing them to be constantly creating or improving goods and services (Essinger & Gay, 2002; Motley-Saunders, 2006; Weindenbaum, 2004).

To solve their *survive or thrive* dilemma, organizations are focusing primarily on their core businesses. That is why they are assigning the time and resources that have to be spent on peripheral activities to other organizations that are experts in those areas. This is known as the management practice of *outsourcing* (Muscato, 1998; Trunick, 2007; Zolkos, 2007).

Outsourcing could be defined as the delegation of jobs from internal production to a third party service provider, such as a sub-contractor.

Outsourcing is done in some instances to cut costs, improve quality, or free company resources to focus on issues critical to their mission (Barthelemy, 2003;

Essinger & Gay, 2002; Gay, 2003; Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2005; Mazzawi, Munsif & Stark, 2003).

At the present, outsourcing is a commonly used practice within the business community. It has progressed from those activities that are normally regarded as peripheral like security, catering, cleaning, etcetera, to include critical areas such as, sales, warehouse control, product design, information technology, and so on (McIvor, 2002; Muscato, 1998; Trunick, 2007).

As a matter of fact, outsourcing, in its search for the best alternatives, has been moving out of the limits of the private sector and entering the public sphere. It has also gone outside of the country where the buyer company is located, a practice now called *off-shore* outsourcing (Ortega, 2006; Smike, 2000).

**Outsourcing and working relationships.** The outsourcing trend has also brought to life different kinds of working relationships which can be looked at from the perspective of the employee as employer, supervision, and workmates.

Within the variety of options present in outsourcing relationships, the security officer's position, among others, has a framework that presents some distinctive features. It can be viewed, for example, as being a working relationship where the employee is hired by an employing organization and then goes to work on site at the premises of the employing organization's clients, or the position is generic. This means that the job could be satisfactorily performed with basic training and the position's activities would be similar no matter what the client's activity might be.

Also, the employee is able to work in different parts and could be easily moved from one working position to another. In many cases, the employee is not supervised all shift long by anyone from the employing organization. Finally, in some cases, the employee is the only person from the employing organization working at a site. In the following section of this study a more detailed description of the security officer's outsourcing field and related characteristics is presented.

**Security officers outsourcing and security officers' outsourcing companies.** The security officers' position could be cited as a commonly outsourced or sub-contracted position. This is because "the cost savings from replacing all or part of a proprietary force with contract guards offers a significant budgetary advantage" (Canton, 1996, p. 9).

During a conference in 2005, Posadas presented an estimate of the sales volume of the SOO field in the U.S.A. This is where, he says, it is projected that for the year 2008 there will be an anticipated market of approximately US \$47 billion, and for 2013, he said, it will rise to US \$61 billion.

SOOC's are those companies that make their business providing a security officer outsourcing service under a contract with agreed standards, costs and conditions. There are some companies in which outsourcing officers is their only line of business. At the same time other firms offer integrated security services with SOO as one of their business lines.

World-wide, many SOOC have been created to respond to this market's need and they try to fulfill the demand for these services. SOOC could be divided into three categories: (a) local companies, which generally are owner operated;

(b) regional or countrywide companies; and (c) international organizations that provide integral security services which include officer outsourcing to firms around the world.

The kind of contracts that a company captures depends on its size. Larger companies can afford to handle better contracts because of the administrative and financial support they have. On the other hand, small local companies could acquire more client loyalty due to the tight relationship that is developed between the client and the manager, who is usually the owner of the outsourcing company. But no matter the size of the contract or the kind of company, they all rely on the security officers' work as their way to provide a service and make money (Zalud, 2005).

To deliver good service and maintain their customers' trust, SOOC's need to have well-trained and responsible security officers (Cordivari, 2010; Heil, 2006). Most of the time SOOC's have their clients and employees spread-out over wide geographical areas where, even when making full use of roving supervisors, it is almost impossible to supervise every officer's work during the entire shift.

Therefore, they have come to rely on the officer's capability and trustworthiness to have satisfied customers. With satisfied customers, SOOC's can assure themselves of the continuance of their contracts, as well as the possibility of using those clients as referrals to gain more business. Obtaining more contracts means for the SOOC's the chance to manage a larger force of officers and further reduce their operating costs.

Reduced operating cost is a key factor in SOOC's because they operate with a low profit margin per officer. This low margin operation often results in low paid officers. This could be one of the reasons for the industry's high turnover rates. Thus, SOOC's have to be very aware of expenses, including turnover, and also of their employees' good performance (Canton, 1996; Craddock, 2001; and Dingle, 2005).

In an effort to reduce turnover rates, some organizations have raised salaries for their proprietary security people and have in this way reduced the rate of employees quitting. But Goodboe (2002) also argues that: "...while better pay for officers is important, other factors also affect turnover" (p. 2). The factors he refers to are personal attitude, training, and treatment. In his workplace, he made some attempts to improve these factors and he obtained positive results in reducing turnover.

Bitzer (2006) argues that if companies want to reduce their security officers' turnover rate they should put into practice some programs that industrial psychologists have successfully implemented in industries such as the fast food and retail businesses, other sectors also having high turnover rates. These programs include pre-employment screening, personality tests and background checking in order to know if the candidate would be the best person for the job. Obviously, these programs should also adhere to all of the state and federal laws on hiring, which might vary depending on the country where the contracting process is done.

Also, he suggests some post-employment strategies such as, organizational socialization, supervisory training and higher pay. Although some of these measures are expensive, they could be paid for by the savings that result from the reduction of turnover (Bitzer, 2006).

**Security officers outsourcing companies in Mexico.** In the 1980s and as a response to the outsourcing trend in the market, some Mexican firms started to look for options to move from proprietary security officer forces to outsourced ones. Firms that could provide this service began getting established in Mexico.

According to the Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Privada (National Council of Private Security) in Mexico, in 2008 there were an estimated 10,000 companies providing security services and eight out of 10 were operating in an illegal way. Illegal companies are not registered with governmental authorities and they do not comply with legal requisites to operate (Brito, 2008a; Craddock, 2001; Hernandez, 2009).

These companies represent serious damage to the market because the wages and benefits that they pay their employees are lower and general working conditions fall below the standards.

Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, where this study will be carried out, is not the exception to the rule. Unfortunately, there is no published data describing the number of companies that operate in this city, either legally or illegally.

Even though companies that operate legally are more government regulated and generally pay better salaries and offer more training and development for their employees, they still do not escape high turnover rates



(Brito, 2008b). However, these rates are lower than the ones held by illegal companies which do not offer the same benefits to their personnel.

**The security officer position.** Regarding the importance that security officers have in Mexico the numbers speak for themselves. For example, in Mexico in 2010 there were about 160,000 people working directly in private security companies, and 50,000 more in business related to these companies (Torres, 2010).

A security officer position in Mexico, as in other parts of the world, is generally considered as a second-class job in regard to salary. This includes both proprietary and contracted officers, but according to experience the wages of the latter are the lowest. The problem with the industry's depressed salaries is such that in 2006 an effort was initiated to unionize security officers in Los Angeles, CA.

One of the arguments for this movement was that security officers typically make about US \$6.00 per hour. This is less than the US \$12.00 per hour, plus benefits, that a unionized janitor could make (Mathews, 2006; Selvin, 2007).

The issue regarding the low security officers' pay scale is also a nuisance for the industry, because it makes it hard to find people who would like to work in this position.

The problem seems to be such a common phenomena in the U.S.A. that it has attracted the attention of the press and a number of articles have been published, such as the one in The Boston Globe that said: "...a tight labor market, and low starting salaries are responsible for the worker shortage in the

security officer industry” (Bushnell, 2001, p. G1). Additionally, an article published in the Los Angeles Times refers to the great need for security officers that arose after the events of September 11th, 2001 and the difficulty finding candidates (White, 2001).

Notwithstanding their generally low paid job, security officers frequently interact with the public and are seen, not only by the public but also by the courts, as representatives of the organization that they protect (Cordivari, 2010; Heil, 2006). Security officers help to secure people’s lives and assets, their work aids corporations in saving money, and in some cases they accomplish all this with just their simple physical presence. Furthermore, private security officers complement public security forces and help enforce the law.

Even though the security officer plays an important role in both business and/or social communities, the position comes with a low salary and, even worse, it does not seem to be given much recognition. This in turn creates different forms of dissatisfaction among the people who are employed in this industry and ultimately turnover rates increase.

Besides low wages and a lack of recognition, boredom is another important concern in the security officer’s work. Boredom is inherent in many security officers’ positions. This is because some of the job’s assignments may be extremely routine and monotonous. An active role is required from supervisors in order to involve officers in more decision-making, in redesigning the position or adding non-security assignments to make it more attractive.

Supervisors also need to acquire a deeper knowledge of their employees in order to appropriately motivate them (Bitzer, 2006; Brislin, 1994; Gonzalez, 2007).

Although it may seem that a low salary, lack of recognition and boredom are enough issues to make a position unattractive, it has to be noted that security officers have longer working hours than other individuals, at least in Mexico.

Regularly a security officer in this country works an average of 62.73 hours per week. This means that security officers work in average 14.73 hours more than the 48 hours per week established by law (Rivero, 2007).

Up to now, with this portrayal of the security officers' position and its job conditions, it is possible to state that some of the reasons for the high turnover rate in the industry could be related to low wages, lack of job recognition, boredom, and long working hours. But there are still a number of people who perform this work and have been in their position for a long time. Therefore, an obligatory question may be posed: Why? And this is precisely the purpose of this study, to get some insight about the answer to this question.

**Expected future of the security officer position.** The future seems to be promising for the security officer industry in the United States and worldwide: "Since September 11th, the demand for security guards has increased dramatically, with forecasts predicting that the contract-security industry will generate US \$15 billion by 2004, up from US \$11.6 billion last year" (Armour, 2001, p. B01).

Moreover, “Pinkerton, Burns International and Wackenhut, which together employ over 170,000 officers worldwide, are expected to sign-up 15,000 more, an action fueled by plans to federalize airport security” (White, 2001, p. 1).

In past years, the security area has experienced a big change due to technology. This will undoubtedly continue be the tendency for the time to come, as technology seems to be a non-stopping, awkward race in almost every field in our world.

Some of the functions that security officers performed in recent years are now carried out by technological devices, but as Randolph Brock said in 1987: “In theory the increase in sophistication of electronic monitoring devices should have decreased the need for the human element. To some extent this has been the case; but, this decrease has been overshadowed by the dramatic increase in the total number of security guards employed” (Tyska & Fenelly, 1987, p. 266).

This could be because there is still a need for human participation in the protection field, either for decision-making when responding to electronic devices, or because some places, due to their nature, will always need the presence of officers, or--going back to Brock again--simply because “Guards in some companies will continue to exist, even if they could be replaced by technology. This is because the Chairman of the Board does not want to be greeted by a robot” (Tyska & Fenelly, 1987, p. 267).

The technological advances in the protection field and the roles that officers are performing these days, managing electronic devices or in public related scenarios, calls for better trained and educated officers. This is a trend

that appears to continue into the future (Cordivari, 2010). The officer's average educational level as well as age and physical condition have been changing through time, as it was expressed some years ago, and is still a valid notion: "Tomorrow's guard will be older and better educated than today's, but still poorly paid in relation to other occupations" (Tyska & Fenelly, 1987, p. 265).

Even more, currently Mexico is living under a siege of drug violence that has, in 2 years, increased the country's security expenses about 23%, being the private sector the most affected (Herrera & Vega, 2011).

This surge of drug violence, has led wealthy people and foreigners to leave the country searching for more secure places to live and work. Also, growing numbers of companies are deciding to limit their investments in the country with a consequent economic activity decrease and losses for every sector of the population (Casey, 2010a; Casey, 2010b; Casey & Haggerty, 2010; Garcia, 2010; Gascon, 2011).

Monterrey, the home place of the research, Mexico's business capital and richest city in the country is not exempt from this threat. Civilians and local businesses are living in fear, not only of the chance of being caught in crossfire between drug cartels, but of the increased number of kidnappings, violent robberies, and extortions demanding protection money (Lunhow, 2010).

Therefore, the civilian population is demanding more and more professional private protection services. Amongst these services it is included the contracted security officers' one, which now is searching for more professional,

better trained, and deeper background checked personnel, which is difficult to accomplish because of the high turnover rates of the position.

Summarizing this section, the importance that the security officer position has in our daily lives is clear. The industry demands are increasing, both in numbers of people employed and in their educational and performance level. Even so, it remains a low paid position both in money and recognition.

High turnover rates seriously impact the industry, and up until now there has been little or no research done to understand and attempt to reduce them. Lowering the turnover in the industry could aid in having better trained officers. For the SOOC it could mean the possibility of charging more competitive prices on contracts, something that would make security companies more profitable and give them the chance to offer employees better opportunities.

## **Section II**

**Focus of the study.** This research will be focused on exploring the reasons why some security officers have been working for their SOOC's for over a year, which could mean that in the first place they are satisfied with their organizations, and secondly, that they are happy with their positions in Monterrey, Mexico.

**Problem statement.** Regardless that the security officers' industry seems to have a solid future, and its importance is recognized in many aspects in the business, public and/or private arenas, up until now it is a not well-rewarded job. Reward in this context means not only the economic side, but the recognition it

deserves. These issues are more notorious in the outsourcing area than in the in-house one. Security officers in Monterrey are included in this reality.

As in other parts of the world, the SOOC's in Monterrey, besides being a source of employment, operate with high turnover rates. This is something that does not allow them to dedicate time to adequately train and develop their officers. Consequently, there could be a decrease in the quality of the security service offered. Furthermore, these kinds of companies are low profit ones and they have to be careful about their expenses, especially when repositioning of personnel represents a significant outlay for them.

It looks like there is a trend. Companies are not able to economically reward the officers better because customers do not want to pay more. They argue that the poor training and the high turnover rates among security officers doesn't merit higher salaries, and so on.

But here comes the counter, if not the main point: some officers do stay in their jobs for longer periods of time and that in itself may mean there is a positive return on the investment for adequate selection, training, and development programs.

With all the facts mentioned above, the security industry faces a problem, a high turnover rate, and this leads to a series of other problems. Despite the inconveniences, there are still some individuals who stay with their companies for periods of time longer than a year, which raises the question: What do they find in their organizations that make them stay?

Previously, some empirical information has been presented regarding the reasons for security officers' turnover. These reasons are the lack of training, treatment, personal attitude, job boredom, and each of these could be a cause of job dissatisfaction (Brislin, 1994; Gonzalez, 2006; Goodboe, 2002).

Apart from boredom, the issues of lack of training, treatment and personal attitude were empirically studied in the U.S., and may or may not differ from their Mexican security officer counterparts. Up until now there isn't any evidence of this kind of research on the issue having been done within the Mexican culture and its organizations.

**Purpose statement.** The overall purpose of this study will be to discover some variables which contribute to make the contracted security officers in Monterrey, Mexico, stay in their jobs and continue with employing companies for more than one year.

**Significance of the study.** The results obtained in this research will likely contribute to the knowledge of the outsourced security officer field, and could also bring about a better understanding of the individuals who perform this job. Also, the results might even allow employers to enhance their security guards' working conditions, personnel and professional development, and thus make the position more meaningful and rewarding. This study could also help contribute to the development of interest in doing more research in the field, since up to now there has been little done (or at least published) on what is an ever-increasing job opportunity.



Moreover, the results could also highlight the outsourcing industry in general, where there is also a lack of research and theory (Benson, 1998; Marquardt, 2002; Pearce, 1993).

### **Section III**

**Conceptual approach.** With the issues presented it may seem that one track to conduct the study would be to look at the voluntary turnover of security officers, but the research on turnover has some disadvantages. Time is one of them because it would take too long to get an appropriate sample size. And, time lag could affect the overall results of this study. Another disadvantage is the difficulty of getting accurate information from dismissed employees (Ahr & Ahr, 2000; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000).

Therefore, the projected scope for this research is to study the security officers who are still working in the field. The intention is to discover some variables that might have a positive impact on their intention to stay with their employing companies for more than a year.

Intent to stay or leave an organization is the outcome of a comparison process among the obvious factors of satisfaction that individuals find in their current position versus what they expect. Thus, if employees feel that their work expectancies are conveniently fulfilled, they may decide to continue with their positions. On the contrary, if they feel that they could get more from their jobs elsewhere, they may think about leaving or actually leave the organization.

When someone decides to stay in a firm, s/he becomes what would be named a committed employee. Commitment to an organization, in this context,

takes three forms: (a) affective, when the employee wants to be in that organization; (b) normative, when the employee feels that leaving an organization would mean a loss; and (c) continuance, when the employee feels that s/he ought to be in the organization. These three kinds of commitment seldom are presented as an isolated entity. More often, a committed employee may feel a combination of the three forms (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Furthermore, an individual could have commitments to more than one entity, either inside or outside an organization. Within an organization, for instance, an individual might be committed to the supervisor, the work group, the management, and so on. These kinds of relationships are known in the literature as multiple commitments.

Outsourcing relationships present the situation of a double commitment, that is, commitment to the employing company and also to the client's organization. Commitment or loyalty to an organization comes about when a satisfactory amount of job fulfillment is present. Job satisfaction is reflected in such issues as (a) the organization as a whole, (b) the work environment, (c) the job itself, and, (d) the individual's characteristics (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

It is precisely these issues about commitment and job satisfaction that are going to provide the foundation for this study, in which the overall objective is to explore the occupational field and discover how different elements manifest themselves in the security officers' decision to stay with their employing companies.

**Highlights of the research design.** The design of the study will be non-experimental because only existing situations are going to be observed; there will be no intentional manipulations of variables, or a construction of a situation to be researched. Non-experimental studies could be classified as cross-sectional or longitudinal, depending on the timing of the data collection.

This study will be cross-sectional due to the fact that data is going to be collected in one stage because the purpose is to describe and analyze variables in a fixed period of time (Hernandez-Sampieri, Fernandez-Collado, & Baptista-Lucio, 2003).

The study will be explorative because there hasn't been any research done in the field, especially in a Mexican setting. Also, it will be qualitative because the variables that may influence the security officers' intent to stay in their organization are unknown, thus there is a lack of theoretical base for the study (Creswell, 1994; Hernandez-Sampieri, et al., 2003).

### **Summary of the Chapter**

This proposal is projected to be the base of an exploratory study which intends to find some clues about why contracted security officers stay in their employing companies for more than a year. Its importance arises from the high turnover rates that are present in the industry.

Added importance comes from the expected development and economic impact that the industry has, and promises to have in the future. These facts, combined with a lack of formal research in the area, are the issues that make the

study significant. Results could have an impact not only on the security officers, but also influence employers, customers, and even the general public.

Also, the results of this study could be helpful to other outsourced jobs such as janitors, nurses, product promoters, and so on, as long as they have some of the characteristics of the security officers' positions regarding going to work to a client's premises, not being supervised all shift long, and not having any subordinates.

The next chapter of the proposal will present the theoretical support because, although there is little, if any, research done in the security officer's field, the literature presents a significant amount of research in areas of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, which are going to be used as guidelines to support this research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter presents the theoretical bases of the research. It is divided into two sections. Due to the fact that this study was carried out in Mexico, Section I presents a brief description of this country's culture and its implications for the constructs presented in the research's conceptual model.

Section II, in first instance, presents the conceptual approach of the research which is based in the body of knowledge of organizational behavior that is directed to increase organizational effectiveness. Within this body of knowledge, organizational effectiveness is determined by some dependent variables which comprise among others, job satisfaction and employee turnover, and its counter part of employee retention, the center piece of this research. Also, an explanation is presented of the advantages of studying retention instead turnover.

After those explanations, the theoretical foundations and the conceptual model developed by the researcher are set forth in order to provide better understanding of the literature's research.

The theoretical foundations of the study are based in employee retention, voluntary turnover, and decision to leave or stay in an organization, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job embeddedness, which are described in the contents of the chapter.

## Section I

**Mexican culture.** Hofstede (1997) refers to an anthropological culture as the mental programming that every individual has, and guides her/his thinking, feeling, and potential acting; this program, he says, is not inherited, is learned. It starts at home and goes on for a lifetime, molded by the society or societies where the individual stays.

The core element for anthropological culture is represented by values and basic assumptions. To Hofstede (1997), values are acquired during the early years of an individual; are unconscious; could not be seen, but only be inferred by the way someone acts; represent tendencies to prefer certain state of affairs over others; and, are feelings that have a positive and a negative side.

Moreover, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's (1997) model of culture, express that norms and values are implicit, and are represented as the cultural layer that covers basic assumptions. Values for these authors are described as tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others, or as opposites like right and wrong, or good and evil.

As long as individuals are embedded in their country culture, and this culture makes a difference in the way they behave or react to certain stimuli, it is worth noting that when studying research results, it is important to recognize that these may not be accurate for a certain country, given that the research was performed in a different culture.

In the case of this study, most of the literature is based in countries different from Mexico; however, there is a small body of research done in this

country which was explored in order to get an idea of how the constructs previously described operate inside this culture.

The importance of cultural effects on organizations and work has been recognized and studied by various researchers. Among them, Hofstede's (1997), explanation of the cultural differences between nations has been of particular importance (Borycki, Thorn, & LeMater, 1998; Najera, 2008; Peterson, Puia, & Suess, 2003).

In his studies, Hofstede (1997) presents five cultural dimensions under which the behavior of individuals could be explained. These dimensions include collectivism, masculinity/femininity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. These dimensions appear in every country and make a difference in the way that individuals behave or respond to certain stimulus. A brief description of these dimensions, as they apply to the Mexican Culture, is presented in the paragraphs bellow.

Mexico is shown as a collectivistic country, where the group is preferred over individualist roles. Principles of male dominance and age-based authority are considered as the core of Mexican families. Mexicans are rooted in an extended system of family and friends based on the principles of collectivism. Belonging to a collectivist culture, Mexican workers seem to be committed to family and friends first, work second (Borycki et al., 1998; Peterson et al., 2003). They do not separate their work lives from the rest of their life, thus workers desire job relationships that cause feelings of balance between work and home (Peterson et al., 2003).

Also, Mexico is a masculine culture, where masculine and feminine Mexican roles are clearly differentiated. Mexican men should be responsible for providing, and women are in charge of their homes. Mexico holds the second place on the masculinity dimension in Latin America, which means that men occupy most of the power positions in the social structure (Hofstede, 1997; Najera, 2008; Peterson et al., 2003).

The power distance dimension is defined by Hofstede (1997) as the index that indicates that people in a society are unequal. In their workplace Mexican workers clearly see an inequality between them and their supervisors and managers. Even though they know that their boss has power, they want to be treated with respect by employers and coworkers. Once respected, Mexicans create a strong emotional relationship with their supervisor, and look to their bosses to provide respect and caring (Najera, 2008; Peterson et al., 2003).

Uncertainty avoidance is defined by Hofstede (1997) as the way that people deal with uncertainty. Mexicans seek present satisfactions and prefer known rather than unknown future outcomes (Najera, 2008).

Literature reports that in Mexico the significant contributors to organizational commitment are: job satisfaction, general and organizational based self- esteem, work group autonomy, and organizational citizenship (Boyricky et al., 1998; Chinen & Enomoto, 2004). Organizational commitment is enhanced through satisfactory work, supervision, pay, ascension, and relationships with coworkers; longer tenure and more productivity could be



expected in workers when these issues are reasonably covered (Borycki et al., 1998; Peterson et al., 2003).

Regarding job satisfaction, reports show that it is certainly important for the Mexican worker; the issues that enhance job satisfaction in a Mexican organization are: supervision, recognizing that the supervisor is an important part of workers life; appreciation, or the act of recognizing and appreciating employees by superiors and peers; coworkers, in the way that friendships gained with work mates are essential to the work satisfaction; pay and benefits, which are more associated with overall job satisfaction for new employees than for senior ones, because when senior employees consider that pay and benefits are fair they are not a significant job satisfaction factor (Lovett, Hardebeck, Coyle & Torres Solis, 2006; Najera, 2008; Peterson et al., 2003).

For Mexican workers, the intention to leave or stay in an organization is influenced by job satisfaction and organizational commitment; as these factors become stronger, they lower the probability of job resignations. On the other hand, some life events and shocks increase the possibilities of a job resignation. When a shock occurs, it increases the expected utility of withdrawal, and the search and comparison for other job alternatives (West, 2000).

Summarizing, Mexican workers are more accepting of power distance, more uncertainty avoiding, more collective and more masculine than workers from other cultures. In Mexican organizations, providing job satisfaction, positive leadership behaviors, consistency and predictability may go a long way toward inviting workers to stay with their companies (Peterson et al., 2003).

After this portrayal of Mexican culture, the next step in this chapter is to present and describe the conceptual approach and model that is the theoretical foundation of the research.

## **Section II**

**Conceptual approach.** Organizational behavior (OB) studies how people behave inside organizations, in order to apply such body of knowledge to increase organizational effectiveness. OB is composed by the study of three blocks, the individual, the group, and the organization as a whole, and seeks to understand and explain some of the dependent and independent variables that impact overall organizational effectiveness. Amongst the dependent variables, or those affected by the behavior of the independent variables, there are: (a) organizational productivity, or the measurement of the organizational performance including efficiency and efficacy; (b) employee absenteeism; (c) employee turnover; (d) deviant work behaviors; (e) organizational citizenship; and (f) job satisfaction (Robbins, 2004; Robbins & Judge, 2009).

The main determinants of those six dependent variables are the independent ones, which are the presumed cause of the dependent variable change, and are explained in OB's three blocks of study. The first or individual level includes personal demographics, personal traits, emotional structure, values, attitudes, aptitudes, perception, individual decision making, learning and motivation. In the second level, independent variables include group decision making, leadership and trust, work groups structure, conflict management, power and politics, effective work teams, and communication. The third level

encompasses variables such as organizational culture, organizational design and human resources policies and practices (Robbins, 2004; Robbins & Judge, 2009).

The intention of this study is to conduct research related to employee retention, which undoubtedly is related to the dependent variable employee turnover. Previous research found that studying the individuals that left an organization could not be accurate, because those individuals may not say the truth about the reasons why they had decided to quit their jobs or leave their organizations as long as they do not feel that they have the responsibility of doing so, because they do not form part of that workforce any more (Ahr & Ahr, 2000; Griffeth et al., 2000; Mowday, 1981). This is why the focus of this study will be to research the reasons that make people stay in their organizations for more than one year.

**Conceptual model.** In order to give more clarity and congruence to the literature research in this project, a conceptual model was developed that shows the constructs that were studied as well as their relationships, this model is shown in Figure 1, and the constructs described below.

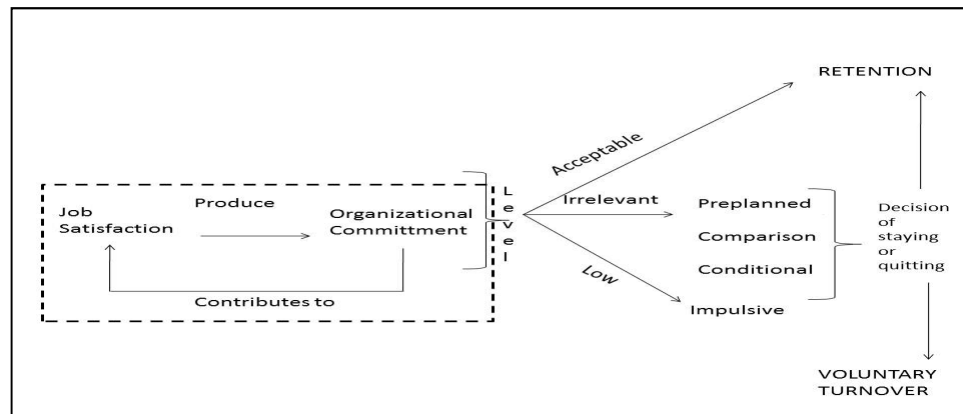


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

**Retention.** Employee retention is the foundation of the study and refers to the process of attracting, selecting, caring about, training, developing, and keeping a workforce so that it can perform its job in an organization. Job retention has as its ultimate goal to create a work environment that allows good employees to stay as long as possible, to permit mismatched employees to leave soon or find a more compatible job to them, and to motivate employees to be more productive. Organizations need to practice retention from top executives posts to the lowest organizational positions (Smith, 2001; Steel, Griffeth, & Hom, 2002). The main reason to practice retention relates to cost, because finding a new employee has associated expenses, such as, those generated because of the employee's departure, replacement, vacancy, training and development, and performance differential (Brannick, 1999; Pinkovitz, Moskal, & Green, 1996-1997; Smith, 2001; Steel et al., 2002).

A continual practice of retention is always important. During economic booms, retention is relevant because the job market grows and makes it very easy for people to find a job; hence, there is no incentive for workers to remain in what they could consider, or feel, an inferior or demeaning work environment (Pinkovitz et al., 1996-1997; Smith, 2001). In times of business slowdowns high levels of unemployment may dissuade some workers to leave their jobs, but this dissuasion may not apply to all employees. The risk for organizations is that they still could lose access to the talents of individuals with specialized skills and training (Pinkovitz et al., 1996-1997; Smith, 2001; Steel et al., 2002).

Every organization, depending upon its characteristics, may develop its own retention policy, always focused in all levels and positions. In order to develop a suitable retention policy for an organization, an issue that must be addressed is the need to get accurate information about why its people quit or stay. To obtain this information, companies have to rely on exit interviews or surveys of former employees, or from the valued stayers. An organization should not rely on a retention policy that merely replicates what other organizations do, or put in place retention practices based on what management thinks appropriate for that organization (Lloyd, 2000; Steel et al., 2002).

Having information about the reason why people stay or quit an organization is not the only element needed to elaborate a good retention policy, it is also necessary to consider issues like the average turnover rate of the industry, data on who is quitting, best practices in the business and findings on retention research.

Lloyd (2000), states that organizations are eager to understand why people change jobs, in order to discover how to retain them. She cites a survey done by the Development Dimensions International (DDI) of Bridgeville, Pennsylvania that reveals a disconnection between what companies believe causes turnover, and why workers actually leave. This study cites the five main qualities, and their incidence percentage, that employees described as important reasons to stay in their work: (a) balance between work and outside life, 84%; (b) meaningfulness of work, 79%; (c) trust between coworkers, 79%; (d) relationship with supervisor, 76%; and (e) compensation, 75%. Additionally, the

study also portrays the results obtained from Human Resources managers of what they think of as important issues for retaining employees: (a) opportunities for growth and advancement, 74%; (b) compensation, 58%; (c) level of stress, 47%; (d) relationship with supervisor, 38%; and (e) others/unspecified, 39%. These results show that there is little overlap in the factors deemed important - only employee/supervisor relationships and compensation- and the two groups value them differently. Thus, it seems that there is a need for companies to know more accurately the needs and desires of their employees.

Employee retention has its counterpart, employee turnover, a construct that is described in the following section.

**Voluntary turnover.** Before defining voluntary turnover it is worthwhile to present an explanation of turnover. Stovel & Bontis (2002) define it as “the rotation of workers around the labor market; between firms, jobs, and occupations; and between the states of employment and unemployment” (p. 3). Turnover can be detrimental to any firm’s productivity, because it affects the way organizations perform their business, thus seriously compromising the pursuit of its strategic objectives. In addition, it represents a huge expense to replace and train new employees. Furthermore, turnover embodies high intangible costs such as low employee morale, stress, increased workloads for workers that stay, adverse publicity for high turnover; and represents a loss in the organization’s knowledge (Goodboe, 2002; Mitchel, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001; Pinkovitz, et al., 1996-1997; Stovel & Bontis, 2002; White, 1995).

Turnover has two classifications: involuntary and voluntary. Involuntary turnover refers to the dismissal of employees, due to layoffs or other causes extrinsic to the individual, meaning that individuals do not have the chance to decide whether to remain or not in a job. Voluntary turnover occurs when people resign their jobs because they choose to do so, therefore said individuals pass through a decision making process to decide to leave, or stay in their jobs (Stovel & Bontis, 2002).

When practicing retention, voluntary turnover is worth studying in order to understand why people decide, at a given moment, to leave a job or organization, because if something is done to change the conditions that make people decide to leave the direct result will be an increase in retention.

Reducing voluntary turnover rates has been the target of many studies, because it involves both organizational and individual issues that could be manipulated. It is worthwhile to mention that voluntary employee's resignation is not always bad; it could be convenient to firms, especially in case of resignations from the people who are not the best job performers. Voluntary turnover is harmful when successful employees are lost because of their own decision to leave an organization (Ahr & Ahr, 2000; Stovel & Bontis, 2002; Steel, et al., 2002).

High voluntary turnover rates are characteristic of some industries such as fast food and security. Among security guards, the annual turnover rate exceeds 100% and the worst part about this is that it happens in an industry charged, in some instances, with the security of human beings. This is a significant argument

that supports the development of the present study (Bitzer, 2006; Goodboe, 2002; Orlov, 2006).

Voluntary turnover has been the target of many studies over the years. The intellectual roots for researching voluntary turnover are found in March and Simon (1958) (as cited in Mitchel, et al., 2001 and Mowday, et al., 1982). Their study focused on the desirability and ease of movement, or job alternatives, that employees see themselves as having, and its relationship to their current level of job satisfaction. Other empirical evidence developed through the years showed a modest relationship between the levels of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Also, turnover seems to have an inconsistent relationship with the perceived number and type of employment or occupation alternatives different from the current job (Lee, Mitchel, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999). This evidence motivated the conduct of other lines of research, which are described in the following paragraphs.

As formal investigation in the turnover field continued, other factors besides job satisfaction and ease of movement were integrated into the studies as possible reasons why people leave a job.

Mowday et al. (1982) proposed a model of turnover where the decision making process of leaving or quitting a job did not only rely upon job satisfaction and ease of movement, it was also related to personal characteristics such as values, goals, job expectations, and efforts to change the non-satisfactory situation at work.



Griffeth et al. (2000) performed a meta-analysis about turnover and stated that studies and theory on turnover focus on quitting as induced by: lower levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job search, comparison of alternatives, and withdrawal cognitions. In addition, issues related with certain factors of the work environment, such as job content, stress, work group cohesion, autonomy, distributive justice and promotional chances, demonstrated small to moderate effects in employees' termination process.

Moreover, Ahr & Ahr (2000) have conducted exit interviews in some organizations and compiled a list that classifies the reasons that employees give as the cause of their departure from an organization. Among those reasons, are the following: advancement opportunities, geographical location of the job, immediate supervisor, job itself, job stress, organization rules/policies/procedures, performance appraisal or performance appraisal methods, personal relationship with coworkers, salary/general compensation, training received, upper level management, and working conditions (pp. 4-5).

The common denominator of March and Simon (1958), as cited in Mowday et al., (1982), Lee et al., (1999), Griffeth et al., (2000), and Ahr and Ahr (2000), studies seems to be job satisfaction. The level of job satisfaction that individuals have in their posts largely influences their intentions to leave or stay in an organization.

Up to now, a description has been presented of the constructs of employee retention and turnover, explaining their characteristics and their impact in organizations. To continue with the explanation of the model, the next section

presents an explanation of the decision making process an individual follows in order to choose whether to stay or leave an organization.

**Decision to stay or quit an organization.** The construct of an individual's decision to stay or quit appears in the conceptual model, presented in Figure 1, between retention and voluntary turnover.

This construct is the centerfold of retention and voluntary turnover and originates when someone has doubts about whether or not to continue working in an organization, and consequently having to make a decision. This decision is based upon the individual's set of motives and also, depending on each individual and situation, it is made in different ways (Lee et al., 1999; Maertz & Campion, 2001 (as cited in Maertz & Campion, 2004); Mowday, 1982.

In order to integrate the individuals' motives, and the way they are involved in the decision making process, Maertz and Campion (2004) developed four different types of quitters: impulsive, comparison, preplanned, and conditional. These types of quitters appear in the conceptual model, developed for this research, as conditionings of the decision making process, and are described in the following paragraphs.

Impulsive quitters: the drive to an impulsive quitting is a sharp negative experience followed by an instant desire to leave; they may not be attracted to other alternatives. Impulsive quitting is more avoidable than preplanned quitting and management could focus efforts to increase good feelings toward organizations.

Comparison quitters: alternative job offers attract individuals away from organizations; those individuals are relatively free of strong negative feelings to their current employers. They simply search for something better.

Preplanned quitters: they have planned in advance to leave the organization; this means that they may not have developed a high level of dissatisfaction with the organization. This form of quitting is the least avoidable one, therefore the least amenable to prevention by management.

Conditional quitters: they plan to leave if a certain event occurs. This type of quitters, as well as the comparison ones, searches for arguments in favor of staying in their current jobs more than other types, which suggests a higher degree of job satisfaction. However, for conditional quitters as opposed to comparison quitters, the condition which needs to be met in order to leave the organization will not always involve getting another job offer.

Drawing from these findings it is possible to conclude that: impulsive quitters are the more unpredictable people, moved by lower levels of job satisfaction and with no attachment to the organization. They solely and in an instant decide to leave, and proceed to do so without taking other factors into consideration.

On the other hand, with conditional and preplanned quitters the level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment is irrelevant. Their decision to stay or leave an organization is based on other motives, as explained before.

Thus far, it is made clear that job satisfaction and organizational commitment play an important role in the decision making process, deciding whether to leave or stay in an organization, as shown in the conceptual model.

For that reason, the next two sections of this literature research will be dedicated to explain the concepts of job satisfaction concept and organizational commitment will be discussed.

**Job satisfaction.** Job satisfaction is defined as a positive sensation about the work itself, which arises from an evaluation of its characteristics. It could be said that an individual with a high degree of job satisfaction has positive feelings about his/her work; conversely, an unsatisfied person will have negative thoughts about his/her job. Job satisfaction means not only the work that someone performs, more than the physical or mental activity needed to achieve results, because jobs include the interactions between people, the completion of norms and organizational policies, standards that must be met, experiencing certain working conditions, and so on. (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

The ability to keep employees satisfied is a key factor for running a successful business. Many business leaders have proven that there is a direct correlation between employee satisfaction and business performance indicators such as sales increases, customer satisfaction, profitability, and labor cost containment (Robins & Judge, 2009; Smith, 2001).

Among literature, it is common to find terms such as job satisfaction, overall job satisfaction and employee satisfaction; these terms could be used

interchangeably because their ultimate intention is the same: understanding why people are satisfied in their jobs.

Robbins & Judge (2009) present five issues as the principal facets of satisfaction:

1. Job itself: this issue refers to the challenges that the position presents including decision making, learning, and being heard. In general people like a stimulant and challenging work over a monotonous and predictable one.
2. Payment: the perception that the amount of money that is paid in a position is fair. Money motivates people, especially those with a low economic level, but only to a certain degree. In time, money ceases to motivate, and other forms of motivation arise.
3. Growing opportunities: the chances that an individual has to be promoted to a more challenging or better paid position.
4. Supervision: the fairness of the supervision, including leadership, communication, being taken in account and so on.
5. Mates: the quality of the relationships with peers, and other employees in the organization.

Employee satisfaction and employee dissatisfaction yield different consequences; satisfied employees present behaviors that lead them to be more productive, so they get more recognition, have more chances to be promoted, or to get a better payment, and so on. On the other hand, unsatisfied individuals present behaviors that range from destructive to constructive to organizational

productivity, and may respond to their dissatisfaction in either a passive or an active way (Robinson & Judge, 2009).

Someone who actively responds with constructive behavior could do so through voicing their concerns. They would try to improve work conditions, with suggestions, analyzing problems with superiors or with some union activity.

The loyalty behavior is a passive but optimistic manner of expecting that the organization's conditions improve; in this case, people defend their organization against exterior critics and have the trust that management is doing the right things.

Destructive behaviors can also be active or passive. The quitting behavior is considered an active response. The employee leaves, either by searching for a new position or resigning from the organization.

Negligence, the destructive and passive response, means that individuals passively allow conditions to worsen, exhibiting absenteeism, tardiness, low effort, and a higher rate of errors in work. Therefore, individuals with a low level of job satisfaction represent a possible threat to organizations because they could become negligent when responding passively to their dissatisfaction.

This section of the literature review deals with the importance of job satisfaction as a trigger of voluntary turnover response. According to the information presented it is possible to state that voluntary turnover may arise from those people with an active response to their low level or absence of satisfaction, and that these individuals may form part of the files of the impulsive or comparative quitters formerly described.

Next, we will describe the findings about organizational commitment, the presence or absence of which contributes to increasing the possibilities of leaving or staying in a job.

**Organizational commitment.** When we say that someone is committed, we usually imply or specifically state that he or she is committed to something e.g. his family, work or a project. In the academic literature, the term has been given several meanings, relating to other terms such as loyalty, allegiance and, attachment (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 10). Within the organizational behavior literature, much of the theoretical work on commitment has focused on commitment to the organization, a subject that amply relates to the focus of this study: employee retention.

Commitment to the organization, or organizational commitment, is the psychological state of mind that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and, among other things, has implications for the decision to stay or leave an organization. Employees who are strongly committed to their organizations differ from those with weak commitment in terms of turnover, attendance at work, job performance, employee well-being and organizational citizenship behavior. (Becker, 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Knowing the importance of organizational commitment constructs researchers and academics had made various efforts to clarify the definition of the construct, as well as, the shape of employees' organizational commitment profiles. Regarding the shape of the employees' commitment profiles, these

efforts have resulted in the distinction of two types: attitudinal and behavioral commitment.

Attitudinal commitment focuses on the process by which people come to think about their relationship with the organization; it is a mind set in which individuals consider the extent to which their own values and goals are congruent with those of the organization.

Behavioral commitment relates to the process by which individuals become locked into a certain organizational issue and how they deal with this issue, e.g. being committed to maintain their employment in a given organization, rather than being committed to the organization.

Even though commitment is a psychological state, it is important to acknowledge that this state can develop retrospectively as justification for an ongoing course of action as proposed in the behavioral approach, as well as prospectively based on the perception of present or future conditions of work in a current organization as advocated in the attitudinal approach.

Regarding the definition and scope of the organizational commitment construct, it is possible to say that in its beginning, organizational commitment as a construct was seen as potentially redundant with other work commitment constructs such as job involvement, work ethic, and career commitments. However, through time, organizational commitment has demonstrated in factor analyses studies to be distinguishable from constructs as turnover intention, job satisfaction, job involvement, career salience, occupational commitment, work group attachment, and the Protestant work ethic. Furthermore, organizational



commitment has been seen as a multidimensional construct clearly distinguishable from other forms of workplace commitment (Morrow, 1983).

The multidimensionality of this construct is supported by the fact that, organizations, seen as open systems, comprise various coalitions and constituencies e.g. owners/managers; rank-and-file employees; customers/clients, and so on, each of them with their own goals and values, that may or may not be compatible with the goals of the organizations themselves. Therefore, organizational commitment can be best treated as a collection of multiple commitments to those various coalitions and constituencies.

This collection of commitments includes the possibility that employees can have varying commitment profiles, or differing patterns of commitment, to the various constituencies within the organization, that conflict can exist among an employee's commitments, and that each one of these profiles contribute to employee's overall commitment. Even more, these commitments sometimes are nested, meaning that belonging to one requires belonging to another. For example, being a member of a specific work team requires that one be a member of a particular work unit, division, or organization. These multidimensional considerations, and their consequences, of the organizational commitment construct have important implications for the understanding of the shape of an employee's organizational commitment profile (Becker, 1992; Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Lawler, 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Reichers, 1985; Reichers, 1986).

In an attempt to define the organizational commitment construct, considering its multidimensionality and the way it develops, Meyer and Allen

(1997) expounded a model that presents three components of organizational commitment: affective, normative and continuance. The argument to see these issues as components, rather than types of commitment, is made because an employee's relationship with the organization might reflect varying degrees of all three. The next paragraphs present a brief explanation of each organizational commitment component as explained by Meyer and Allen (1997).

Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization because they want to do so.

Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they feel that they need to do so.

Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization.

Research has demonstrated that affective, continuance and normative commitment are all related to employee retention; that is, each form of commitment should be negatively correlated with employee's intentions to leave the organization and with voluntary turnover behavior. Although correlations are stronger for affective commitment, significant relations between normative and continuance components and turnover are found (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

In some other research in the organizational commitment field, Becker and Billings (1993) identified four dominant commitment profiles: The locally committed, or employees who are attached to their supervisor and work group; the globally committed, who are attached to top management and the organization; the committed, who are attached to both local and global foci; the uncommitted who are attached to neither local nor global foci. Employees who were committed to both local and global foci had the highest level of overall job satisfaction, were least likely to intend to leave, and demonstrated the highest levels of prosocial behavior.

The scope of this study is to explore and know some of the reasons why security officers stay in their jobs for more than a year. The importance of organizational commitment in this study arises from the fact that people who are committed to their organizations are less prone to leave. In an attempt to relate the findings about organizational commitment with the case under study, it is possible to state the following: Uncommitted employees would be the most likely to leave the organization. These individuals match with the impulsive type of quitter or people who make the decision to leave the job without any thinking about some other alternatives.

Employees having some local or global foci could form part of the comparison quitters, or those people who explore the possibility of leaving their current job, but choose to remain because they feel good where they are working, or estimate that the cost of leaving that organization would be more than

the cost of staying. These committed comparison quitters will be the target sample to explore in the study.

It is worth mentioning, that to focus exclusively on turnover as a result of commitment is shortsighted. It is important to recognize that workers, as human beings, inevitably develop commitments of one form or another and that those commitments have an influence in their behavior at work. Overall job satisfaction is arguably as important as whether employees stay or leave, and it is associated with work relevant behaviors such as turnover, absenteeism, job performance, and citizenship behavior (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Wasti, 2003; Robbins & Judge, 2009).

The former sections of this chapter have described organizational issues that may lead to the decision of leaving a job. However, it is also important to consider non work situations could be part of this decision making process. Thus, the next section is related to another important construct, job embeddedness.

**Job embeddedness.** This construct was presented by Mitchel et al., (2001) and described like “a net or a web in which an individual can become stuck. One who is highly embedded has many links that are close together (not highly differentiated)” (p. 3). The critical aspects of job embeddedness are (a) the extent to which people have links to other people or activities either on and off the job, (b) the extent to which their jobs and communities are similar or fit with the other aspects in their life spaces, and (c) the ease with which links can be broken, or what they may leave behind if they move from a job or a city. Their results show that being embedded in an organization or a community is

associated with reduced intent to leave. They also suggest that focusing only on money and job satisfaction, as the levers for retention, may be too limited. Many non-financial and non-attitudinal factors place people in networks that keep them in their jobs.

It was considered that exploring turnover, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job embeddedness could lead to a better understanding of the foundation of this study, employee retention. It is worth noting that although the constructs were presented as separate items during the chapter it is almost impossible to untie them; In reality, they are part of a whole that could hardly be decomposed.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

It is important for organizations to retain their best employees. Employees would decide to stay in their organizations as a result of the integration of factors such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The results of the literature review regarding job satisfaction show that individuals presenting high levels of job satisfaction are more committed and would be less prone to leave an organization. Job satisfaction, and consequently employee retention, could be enhanced through different facets inherent to the job itself: payment, growth opportunities, supervision, the quality of the relationship with work mates, and the balance between work and outside life.

Job satisfaction also appears as an important issue when studying voluntary turnover. It has been demonstrated that individuals with low levels of

job satisfaction compose the population of impulsive, comparison, and conditional quitters.

First in lack of job satisfaction are impulsive quitters, because they leave their jobs in the moment when some shock or life event occurs, with or without any job alternative. In second place come comparison quitters, who decide to leave an organization after a shock occurs, but they do analyze the advantages or disadvantages of making that decision. The third place belongs the conditional quitters, who define something specific happening as a condition to stay or leave. It is important for organizations to improve their practices in order to enhance job satisfaction, as a way to reduce turnover and increase employee retention.

In Mexico, studies show that the intentions to leave or stay in an organization are also influenced by the levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Inside Mexican culture increased levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment are the result of issues such as quality of supervision, personal recognition, relationship with coworkers, pay and benefits, work group autonomy and organizational citizenship.

According to the results of the literature research, it is now possible to conclude that this study, about the reasons why outsourced security officers stay in their jobs for at least more than a year, will be based on exploring different facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among Mexican security officers.

The next chapter will present the proposed methodology to inquire into these fields, in order to get more accurate information about why security officers

decide to stay in their jobs, regardless of the adverse conditions that the position offers.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

The purpose of this study was to discover some variables which contribute to contracted security officers staying in their jobs and employing organization for more than one year, in Monterrey Mexico. The results obtained in this research could provide a better understanding of the feelings and needs of the individuals that perform this job, allow employers to develop retention practices that would enhance security officers' positions and tenure, and contribute to an improvement in their working conditions, as well as their personal and professional development. Additionally, this study could help develop interest in doing more research in the security officers' field, and highlight the outsourcing industry in general as a field of study. As stated in Chapter 1, this study addresses the following research question:

What factors influence contracted security officers in their decision to remain with employers for more than a year?

This chapter describes the research design, the methods and tools used to collect information; the criteria for selecting the security officer's that participated in the study; the way in which the participating companies were chosen as sources of the security officers that made up the sample; the issues related to human subject protection; the way in which data analysis was performed and issues related to its validity and reliability.



## **Research Design**

The design of the study is non-experimental because only existing situations were observed; there was no intentional manipulation of variables, or construction of situations to be researched. Non experimental studies could be classified as cross sectional or longitudinal, depending on the timing of data collection. This study is cross sectional because its purpose was to describe and analyze variables in a fixed period of time, requiring that the data be collected in one stage (Hernandez-Sampieri et al., 2003).

The study is exploratory, because there is no previous research done in the field, especially in a Mexican setting. It is qualitative, because the variables that may influence the security officers' intent to stay in their organizations are currently unknown.

Exploratory research often ends up as descriptive, explicative or correlational. This study ended with both exploratory and descriptive characteristics, because its main purpose was to gather data that could explain the security officer's tenure in an organization (Hernandez-Sampieri et al., 2003; Creswell, 2003).

The next section describes the sources of data and the way they were gathered.

## **Sources of Data**

In accordance to Creswell (1994) the data collection procedures for this study included three steps: (a) selecting the target population as well as the sampling procedures, (b) selecting the way to collect information, and (c)

establishing the protocol for recording information. These steps are described below.

**Targeted population and sampling procedures.** As long as the purpose of qualitative studies is to select the informants that will best answer the research question, an appropriate establishment of the limits or boundaries of the study will ease the information collecting step. Miles and Huberman (as cited in Creswell, 1994) suggest some parameters that the investigator should consider when establishing the boundaries of the study. For this particular study those parameters were: (a) the subjects of the study, referring to the people who provide information; (b) the events, or how the information was collected and; (c) the setting, meaning the place where the research was performed.

***The subjects for the study.*** As the objective of the study was to explore the factors that influence the contracted security officers' decision to remain in their companies for more than a year, the first required step was to appropriately select the companies where the possible candidates work. Based in his expertise and the acquired knowledge in the field, the researcher established the following criteria to set the first boundary of the study.

***Criteria to select the participating companies.*** The companies that were invited as sources of the possible subjects for the research have to be registered and operating according to Mexican law, with more than 5 years of being established and more than 50 security officers employed. The companies must also commit to provide the researcher with lists of employees who will be invited to participate in the research later on.

The first criterion obeys to the reason that the company must have enough time in the security officer's field to ensure that their plan is to remain in the industry, and also to ensure experience in the management of these kinds of companies.

The second criterion was established to make certain that the selected companies have several clients, and that they were not created to meet one specific client's need.

The third criterion was set in order to meet Pepperdine University IRB suggestions regarding the protection of anonymity of the participants. This assures that the companies will not know who participated in the research.

At the time of the study, it was difficult to ascertain the number of contracted security officers companies in Monterrey, because of the prevalence of companies that operate illegally (unregistered or not according to Mexican law). According to published information, in Mexico there are about 10,000 Contracted Security Officers Companies, and eight out of 10 are illegal. This means that there are approximately 2,000 companies operating legally in Mexico. Empirically, it was estimated that there are about 200 companies operating in Monterrey, where the study took place, but that most of them are operating illegally.

Monterrey's Chamber of Commerce Website ([www.asesep.com](http://www.asesep.com)) listed 20 legal companies that operate in the city, however this number is not accurate because the affiliation to this organization is voluntary and, according with the researcher's expertise, not all legal companies are affiliated.

Moreover, the researcher is member of the Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales en Prevención de Pérdidas (AMPPAC), and Monterrey's chapter of the American Society of Industrial Security (ASIS), which affiliate professionals in the security area. Among the members of both associations there are about 15 owners or representatives of legal security officers contracting companies that are not associated to the chamber of commerce. This means that the number of legal companies known to the researcher could be estimated to be around 35.

From these 35 companies, the researcher invited to participate in the study eight companies that met the established criteria and whose owners or CEO's belong to the associations mentioned above, in order to take advantage of both his professional network and the trust developed on his professionalism over time.

Even though the researcher owns a company that meets the above criteria none of his company's personnel was considered as a potential subject for the study because the interview process, which was carried out by him, could be intimidating to security officers that are also his employees. This would result in gathering inaccurate information and ultimately misleading findings.

Later in this chapter, the section named Sampling Procedures presents the methodology that the researcher followed in order to invite both companies and individuals to collaborate in the study. Still, it is important to mention the criteria used to select the possible participants before presenting this information.

***Criteria for selecting subjects for the study.*** The subjects chosen to participate in the study were male or female contracted security officers who

have been working for their companies for more than a year, with a good attendance record and no supervising responsibilities. In the following paragraphs, an explanation of the rationale behind these criteria is presented.

Subjects were chosen regardless of gender because the objective of the study was to explore the reason why they stay in their companies for more than a year, and in the contracted security officer's industry in Mexico gender does not alter working conditions.

Also, these subjects were people who do not have the responsibility to supervise others (Shift Supervisors and/or Client's Facility Supervisors). This criterion was established because of the variance that an added level of responsibility makes on working conditions, pertaining to salary and working shifts, in every company. The intention of the study was to research the lowest level in the chain of command inside the organizational structure of companies, which represent the larger amount of employees and the ones with the highest turnover rates.

Absences to work could be classified either as unavoidable or voluntary. Unavoidable absences, in Mexico, refer to issues like illnesses, funerals, and maternity leaves; voluntary absences happen when an individual has the option to decide whether to attend work or not (De los Santos, 2006). The rationale behind selecting security officers with a good attendance record is that voluntary absenteeism reflects dissatisfaction with a job and/or a company, and the target of the research was to find the reasons behind employee satisfaction with a

company. For the purpose of this research a good attendance record was considered less than five voluntary absences within the last working year.

In addition to this, attendance records were also chosen as a means to select the subjects because, according to the experience of the researcher, these records are kept in almost every SOOC. Other records may or not be available in every company.

**The sample size.** After defining the characteristics of possible participants, researchers need to estimate an appropriate sample size for the study. This sample is one that adequately answers the research question, and accomplishes the limitations and constraints of time, cost, energy, availability of subjects, and other conditions that could affect data collection. Samples in qualitative research are recommended to be small (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Marshall, 1996), thus, the expected sample size for this research was established to be between eight to ten subjects.

**Sampling procedures.** With the criteria defined, in order to choose companies and subjects that could collaborate in the research, the next step was to invite the companies where the subjects for the study were going to be recruited.

**Companies' invitation.** The beginning of the sampling procedure was to invite the eight companies which might collaborate in the study.

To accomplish this, the researcher talked, in person or by telephone, with the eight chosen company owners or CEO's in order to explain the objectives of the study, the need for participation of security officers, and the criteria to select

them. The researcher further described the interview process to be carried out, assured the confidentiality of the individual information to be gathered, and made a commitment to report the general results of the study. He expressed the need to obtain a list containing names, tenure, attendance record, and contacting information of the security officers that worked for the company.

If they chose to participate, a written invitation letter was sent to them by e-mail in order to assure clarity and understanding of the relevant issues. The invitation letter was written in Spanish, as it was the native language of the people that would be invited. Appendix A shows the English translation of this invitation.

An accepting response to the e-mail invitation was the companies' approving documentation to continue with the research process. This document was sent to the IRB prior to beginning the interview process, in order to meet another of the requirements set by this board.

After a company accepted to collaborate with the researcher, he asked for a list that included name, tenure, attendance record and contact information (home or work address, telephone phone number, e-mail address, and so on) of all the security officers in their roster.

**Subjects' invitation.** From these lists the researcher selected 78 subjects who met the criteria for being candidates to participate in the study, and sent them a written invitation either by regular mail, e-mail, or a courier service. Appendix B shows the English translation of this invitation, which was sent in Spanish, the native language of the subjects.

The individuals willing to participate in the study were able to reach the researcher, either by phone or through the e-mail address provided in the invitation, in order to get more detailed information about the research and the conditions that needed to be met in order to participate.

The researcher received 14 telephone calls, but no e-mails, from security officers that were interested in the study. This represented a response from approximately 18% of the invitees.

Through those telephone conversations, the researcher informed participants about the purpose of the study, the methods to be used, the criteria for selecting participants, the potential risks and possible benefits of the study, and the amount of time they would need to commit to it.

Eight security officers agreed with the terms and conditions of the study, and went on to schedule an interview with the researcher, during the participant's time off, so their work and earnings would not be impacted.

In Monterrey, Mexico, most of the contracted security officers' work in a shift model referred to as 12 X 24 which means that individuals work 12 hours a day and rest 24 hours; this allowed the participants to attend the interview without interfering with their work schedule.

Interviews were conducted in person. In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants they took place either in the researcher's personal office, which is away from his contracted security officer's company, or in a public place, like a park. Participant's needs determined the choice of location. In six cases the



researcher's office was chosen as a location, and two others chose a park where many of Monterrey buses commute.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

In accordance with the USA Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, Pepperdine University requires that all research involving human subjects, irrespective of funding, conducted under Pepperdine University's auspices, must be prospectively reviewed and have the continuing approval of the designated Institutional Review Board (Pepperdine University, 2009). Federal guidelines establish that all research involving human subjects must consider how subjects are being protected from harm. A human subject is defined as any person who is studied in any research investigation.

As the nature of this study met the requirements for expedited review under provision Title 45 CFR 46.110 (research category 7) of the federal Protection of Human Subjects Act, Pepperdine's IRB conducted a formal but expedited review and fully approved the conditions of the research.

According to Pepperdine University's guidelines this research qualified as *minimal risk*, meaning that the probability of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are no greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or physiological examinations or tests (Pepperdine University, 2009).

The possible risks for the subjects were related to their job security, should there be a disclosure of individual interview content to their employer, or if the participant was connected to specific responses. This risk refers to the possibility

that an employer could take actions such as firing or reprimanding the employee because of his/her answers. This risk is low and typical for this type of qualitative research. Furthermore, the fact that this study focused on best practices diminishes the risks for the subjects in case of disclosure.

These risk factors were also low because the researcher ensured that there was adequate separation between the researcher, the participants and the participant's organizations, and there were no monies, contracts, or other agreements made that will benefit any of the parties involved.

The researcher will not share the contents of specific interviews with the employers of the participants. Results of the study were presented as blinded responses commonly presented in thick description in qualitative research and aggregate responses, so that the employers (and other readers) cannot determine who may have offered a particular response.

The researcher committed to securely store the data for three years. It will be under password protection while stored in a computer, or in a locked drawer in the case of printed files.

Additionally, all participants received and signed a letter of informed consent (Appendix E) that was presented in Spanish, this being their first language; this letter presents their rights as participants and was signed immediately before the interviews.

In order to protect subjects' confidentiality Pepperdine University's IRB also suggested some considerations regarding the way to collect information

about possible participants from their employing companies. These requirements were met and are explained in the corresponding section of this chapter.

Also, the researcher committed to send to Pepperdine University's IRB, prior to the interviews, the consent from companies that decided to participate in the study. This requisite was also met. In the appendixes section the full approval letter from Pepperdine University's IRB is shown.

### **Data Collection**

The primary data collection strategy was individual face to face interviews with subjects. The focus of the interview was to explore what these security officers find in their organizations that have led them to stay there for more than a year.

Interviews took place away from the subject's worksite or employer's offices either in the researcher's personal office, which is away from his contracted security officer's company, or in a public place, like a park. The selection of the setting was made so that it best accommodated the participant.

The interviews were audio recorded, with the participant's consent. The audio recording was only identified with a number, to protect the anonymity of the individuals.

**Interview structure and role of the researcher.** Semi-structured face to face interviews was the means to collect information. The characteristic of semi-structured interviews is that they are based on a set of issues or questions (Hernandez-Sampieri et al., 2003), but as answers emerge, the researcher is

free to introduce new questions, to obtain the required information about the matter under study.

In this research, interviews were carried out by the researcher to minimize the effects of different interpretations given by multiple interviewers. That being the case, the researcher was aware that qualitative interviews are very similar to ordinary conversations, in that questions and answers follow each other in a logical way, as people take turns talking. He played an active role as listener, because he had to carefully listen to each answer and formulate the next question based on what was said, or not said, in order to obtain the required information. He also had to be alert and, if the need arose, redirect the conversation in order to avoid answers out of the matter of study (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The quality of information resulting from the interviews depends on the quality of interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. For this reason, it was important for the researcher to devote some time to generating trust between himself and the participant. In their interaction, the researcher always showed respect to the interviewees as human beings, and to their answers or opinions. The researcher was conscious of remaining in his role of listener and information gatherer, and not become critical or judgmental.

Appendix C shows the 13 issues that emerged from the researcher's literature review regarding employee retention and job satisfaction. Those issues were used as a guide to develop 10 out of the 12 interview questions, which were included in the interview protocol described in the next section.

**Interview protocol.** A protocol is a way of recording information. Creswell (1994) recommends using a protocol when conducting interviews and provides a list of components that it may contain.

In accordance with the characteristics of this research, the researcher developed the interview protocol shown in Appendix D. This protocol contains scripts related to the researcher's personal presentation, the purpose of the study, the duration of the interview, the assurance of voluntary participation, the assurance of confidentiality, asking for permission to audio record the interviews, and the reading and signing of the informed consent, which was signed immediately before the interview. The protocol also contains the original 12 questions that were going to be asked during the interviews, and the interview's closing questions and comments.

Regarding questions in qualitative interviews, Rubin and Rubin (2005) say that there are three types of questions: main, follow up, and probing. The first 10 questions of the protocol, presented in Appendix D, are the main questions. Their intention was to make the participants think about the things they like in their current companies, and cover the major parts of the research matter. All this is in accordance with the issues that emerged from the literature.

Questions 11 and 12 helped to enrich the results of the study because they allowed the researcher to have a better understanding of the participants' feelings and thoughts that may not have been expressed in their response to the other interview questions. Question 11 was asked in order to capture the

participants' learning during the interview. The purpose of question 12 was to get an idea of the participants' feeling about the subject under study.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that follow up and probing questions ensure that the researcher gets depth, detail, vividness, richness, and nuance also that these questions are made during the interview, without a previous script.

Therefore, the researcher prepared a set of probing and/or follows up questions that could probably be used after the main ones, in order to get more accurate information about the 13 themes or issues that are going to be explored in the research.

This set of probable probing and/or follow up questions is presented in Appendix E, and is not a part of the interview protocol. It was developed to aid the researcher with possible questions that could be used after the response to the main questions, in order to get more accurate information. Those questions would or would not be used during the interviews depending on the answers given to the interview protocol or main questions.

### **Data Analysis**

After the information of the eight interviews had been collected, the next step of the study was to analyze the data in order to get the answer to the research question. The first step to analyze the data was the elaboration of a complete transcript of all the tape recorded interviews. These transcriptions were done by the researcher himself.

After the transcriptions were made and reviewed, the researcher wrote a list of the themes that emerged from the participant's responses and categorized

the answers into these themes. These themes were categorized in four areas: (a) extrinsic to the person, (b) intrinsic to the person, (c) suggestions to owner and CEO's, and (d) reasons to participate in the study.

The area corresponding to factors extrinsic to the person was divided into three themes: (a) company, (b) job, and (c) future. The area related to factors intrinsic to the person presented two main themes: (a) family's opinion, and (b) work and life balance. The remaining two areas were kept without divisions because the amount of data obtained was small.

**Reliability of the results.** In order to check the reliability of the results obtained, (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 1994; Hernandez et al., (2003) recommend that another researcher or researchers apply the same rules used by the investigator in order to see if they make the same decisions upon units of analysis, categories, and themes. If there is any discrepancy, it will be discussed until a consensus is achieved. For this research, the investigator asked an expert in qualitative research to review and validate the results and coding of data.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons why contacted security officers stay in their job and company for more than a year. Currently there is a lack of information about the issue, thus this study will be an explorative one. A qualitative approach was selected, because it one generally recommended to carry on these type of studies.

Semi structured interviews were selected as the means to collect the data that may answer the research question. This kind of interview offers the

advantage of providing in depth information when not much is known about the issue under study.

The target population of the study was security officers with tenure of over a year, with a good attendance record, and that did not have the responsibility to supervise the work of others. These security officers were selected under a set of criteria and their information was obtained through four contracted security officer companies that accepted to participate in the study.

The researcher was the interviewer, and the one who analyzed the data collected in order to find possible answers to the research question.

In order to test the reliability of the results of the study, the investigator shared them with some other experienced researchers in order to validate the criteria used to code data, and to establish the categories and themes on which the results were based.



## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter presents the results obtained in the interviews with eight contracted security officers in Monterrey, Mexico, the objective of which was to explore the factors that contributed to the security officers staying in their companies for more than a year.

As it was presented in Chapter 3, the interviews were semi structured and conducted face to face. They were conducted in Spanish, which is the primary language of the subjects that participated in the study. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and analyzed in Spanish. In order to present the obtained results, the quotations used were translated into English by the researcher. Special care was taken to ensure an accurate translation.

In order to ease the understanding of the results of the research, these were classified in four different areas; each area was divided into categories, and categories were divided into themes and subthemes. This is illustrated in Figure 2 and is followed by its corresponding explanation.

Following that, in the context of this chapter, the themes and sub themes that emerged from the data obtained in the interviews are briefly explained. They are further related to the theoretical findings presented in chapter II, as well as to the Mexican culture and the security officers' field in Monterrey, Mexico. Each theme also includes references to other literature on the subject that support the presented results.

This chapter contains four tables, each followed by a brief description of the most relevant items. The first one presents the demographics of the participants in the study. The other three show a summary of the results that were obtained in the interviews, corresponding to each one of the areas that were explored. The first results that will be presented are the ones regarding the demographics of the participants.

### **Demographics of the Participants**

The following table presents the demographic information of the eight security officers that participated in the study.

Table 1

#### *Demographics of the Participants*

Participant	Age	Years of study	Time as a security officer (Years)	Time in current company (Years)	Economic dependents	Gender
SO1	36	9	4	1.5	1	Male
SO2	69	14	4	4	0	Male
SO3	48	9	15	3	4	Male
SO4	56	9	25	3	3	Male
SO5	52	12	17	6	1	Male
SO6	49	8	6	3	4	Male
SO7	52	6	5	5	2	Male
SO8	47	6	5.5	4	2	Male

As can be observed in Table 1, all participants in the research were males. Although invitations to participate were sent to males and females, the individuals that accepted were all males having an average age of 52.12 years with 12.1 average years of studies; also they showed an average of 10.1 years working as security officers, and 4.06 years working with their current companies.

In the research it was important to collect this data, because the final results undoubtedly are linked to the characteristics of the participants, as will be explained later in this chapter.

Before proceeding to present the results obtained in the study, it is relevant to mention that the researcher noticed a positive attitude towards their companies in seven of the eight security officers that were interviewed. Participant SO7 was less positive and expressed some dissatisfaction because his company was, at the time of the interview, experiencing a decrease in the number of clients, and consequently in the number of security officers employed. This company's crisis was affecting the support that they used to give to employees regarding monetary loans and permissions to leave during personal emergencies or special situations. In some of the quotes that are presented to support the results of the study, he refers to better past situations; also, in the issue related to owner suggestions he expressed his discomfort about the issue related to economic support. His results were considered in the study because he made clear references to the past and the factors he found that had made him stay in this company.

After presenting the demographic data and the former note, the next section describes the process that the researcher followed to classify the results.

### **Classification of the Results**

After analyzing the information that resulted of the interviews and the great amount of data that the researcher had, the next step that was done was to classify them in areas, categories, themes and subthemes as shown in Figure 2.

The first division of the results was a classification into four main areas: (a) organizational factors, (b) personal factors, (c) suggestions, and (d) reasons to participate and learning obtained in the study. A description of these areas is presented below.

**Organizational factors.** This area includes results pertaining to the factors that security officers find agreeable in matters found in their company, job and, in their perceived expected future within the company. Security officers could not change or manipulate those organizational factors as long as they are characteristics from constituencies out of their personal action field.

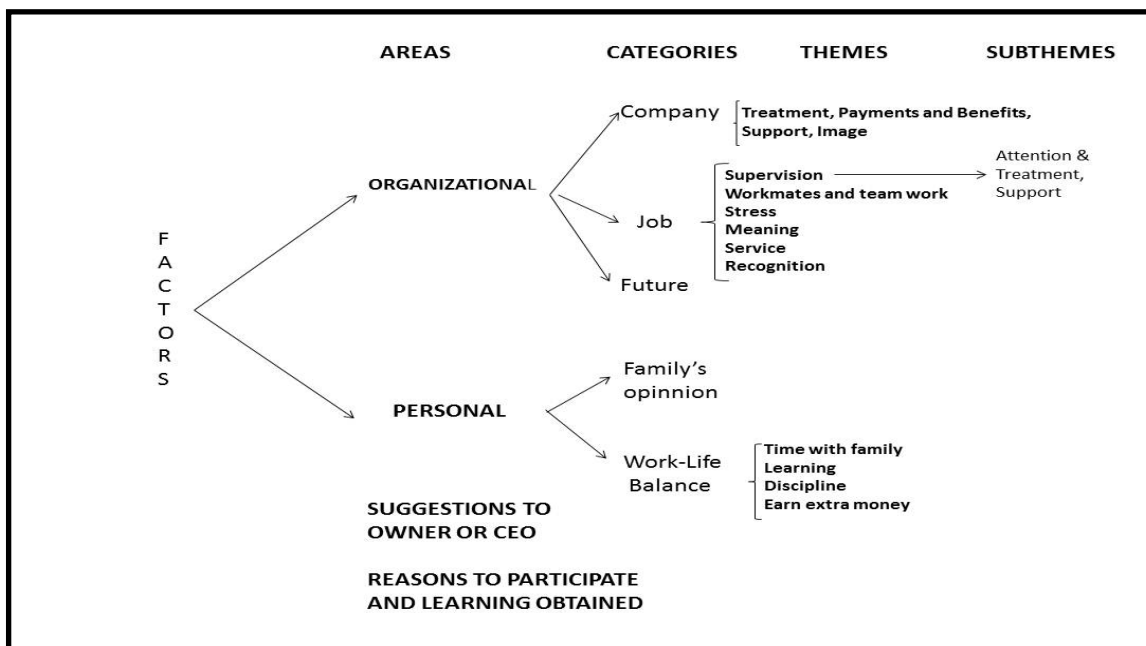


Figure 2. Result's classification.

Regarding the category named company, the themes that emerged during the interviews were related to treatment, payments and benefits, support, and company' image.

The job category resulted an extensive one, as it contains themes related to supervision, relationships with workmates and teamwork, stress, meaning, service to others, and recognition.

The theme related to supervision was divided into two subthemes: attention and treatment, and support; and, the theme presented as meaning was divided into two subthemes: contribution to the employing company and to the client.

The category of future shows the expectations that security officers have about their future in their companies including growth opportunities.

**Personal factors.** This area encompasses the findings regarding themes that impact the person as a human being, and that could be controlled or manipulated by the security officers themselves. The categories that are included in this area are: (a) families' opinion about the job and, (b) work-life interests balance.

The results obtained in the area related to work-life balance, which also cover personal interests, were divided in four themes: (a) time with family, (b) learning, (c) discipline and, (d) earn extra money.

**Suggestions to owner or CEO.** During the interviews this question was asked: If you could tell something to the owner or CEO of the company, what would you say? This area shows some of the answers obtained to this question.

**Reasons to participate in the study and learning obtained.** As closing questions, the security officers where asked why they decided to participate in the study, knowing that their participation was voluntary and represented a loss

in their free time, and if they had learned something thru the interview process. The results obtained to these questions are presented later in this chapter.

This classification into areas, categories, themes and subthemes also allowed the researcher to organize the following presentation of results, obtained after the data collection and analysis.

### **Results about Organizational Factors**

As it is presented in Figure 2, the results of this research were classified in two areas: organizational and personal factors. The area related to organizational factors includes those issues that the security officers could not manipulate or change because they are out of their personal decision making. This area includes results pertaining to the issues that security officers find agreeable in matters found in their company, job, and in their perceived expected future within the company. As long as these issues contribute to the interviewees' permanence in their companies, they were named as best things found in companies and are described below.

**Best things found in the security officers' companies.** In order to find out what were the factors that most satisfy the security officers in their companies, the researcher started listening to some narratives that arose as a response to the following question: Can you tell me about a time when you have felt especially satisfied with your company?

The researcher realized that in some cases it was difficult for the security officers to articulate a story or an answer for this question; they sometimes said that they did not understand the question or gave answers such as: "not that I

remember, it always has been the same” (SO6, personal communication, May 7, 2011). Therefore, the researcher decided to reframe the question and ask instead: What are the things that make you feel at ease in your company?

From the narratives which arose from this answer the researcher heard some stories, most of them relating to the way the participants were treated by the company. They mentioned always getting paid in full and on time, the company support that they had, the job itself, personal recognition and the company’s image. Those issues constitute the main themes that emerged as the factors that security officers find in their companies that make them feel comfortable, and that prompt further exploration during the interviews.

Furthermore, the results obtained for each theme are presented. First, a brief description of the contents of each theme is included, along with some quotations that support them. The first of the themes that is going to be described is treatment.

**Treatment.** Treatment refers to the security officer’s perception about the attitudes and conducts or behaviors that people from the company manifested to them in their daily work and experiences.

Five out of the eight security officers articulated that one of the things that they appreciate most about their companies is the way that they are treated by their supervisors, the company owners and the administrative personnel.

Excerpts from the answers are:

“Since I started working here they have always treated me well, they always solve my problems, I am very thankful and I feel good working here, they treat me well in all aspects, that is why I have stayed here: I like the way they treat me, I feel comfortable with my superiors, I do not have

something to say about my supervisor, my coordinator, or the owner” (SO1).

“The personnel in the office take care of me perfectly; it is as if I am talking to the owner” (SO4).

“What is so good about my company is that they treat me very well. The treatment is personalized. I can talk not only with my supervisor but to anyone in the company, even with the owner...time goes by and I have three years in the company” (SO5).

“In general, everything is alright...I could not say more....they do not fail in anything...they treat me well” (SO6).

One security officer expressed that he is uncomfortable with the treatment he currently receives in his company, and he is considering leaving. He expressed that some time ago things were different than they are currently, and for this reason he has had thoughts of withdrawing. He said: “In the past, the office personnel highly supported us, they helped us, so I tried to do my best on the job because I felt comfortable” (SO7).

Besides the good treatment that the security officers expressed they have found in their company, they also mentioned that getting their full payment on time was another factor they like from their companies. A description of this issue follows.

**Payment and benefits.** This issue refers to the fact that on pay days security officers always get their money and are paid in full, this means receiving their regular wage and their earnings for over time and holidays.

In Monterrey a common practice among security officer outsourcing companies is that if they do not have enough cash to pay to their employees, they make partial payments until they get the money to pay their employees in



full; these payments include the regular wage, overtime and holiday premiums.

According to Mexican Labor Regulations holidays and overtime hours have to be paid for double the regular wage.

The term benefits, used in this section, refers to the additional earnings that employees in Mexico must have. These benefits are a Christmas bonus that has to be paid in December, and annual vacation days that include an economic compensation additional to regular wage.

It is worth mentioning that the benefits issue also includes the affiliation to the social security system in Mexico, which cares for health, retirement, and daycare for the worker's children. For employers it is an obligation to affiliate all their workers, but not all of them do it because it is expensive. In this research, security officers referred to the fact that through their companies they are affiliated to social security. This is convenient due to the security they feel that they would be prepared in case of an illness of one of the members of their family or themselves.

Some quotations concerning this theme are:

"...I have stayed there (in his company) because there are other companies that do not give benefits...here they pay you everything, they never owe you something, we have all the benefits" (SO1).

"What I like about my company is that they never fail with payments, they are very responsible with that" (SO2).

"I used to work in a company where they paid overtime one or two months after you worked it...in some places they accumulate holidays and pay them once a year...In my company holidays and overtime are paid in their moment...that makes the security officers decide to remain in this kind of companies...we create roots...I stay here because I am better off...Some security officers enter a company and although they are treated well, they are uncomfortable because they are not paid on time" (SO5).

“My salary. I feel comfortable because during the time I have been working here, they have never failed me with the payments, they pay me overtime in the moment, in my current position they (the company) give us a bonus and a compensation, I do not miss work days, I do not have problems” (SO6).

“What I like the most about my company is that they pay me punctually” (SO7).

“My salary has never been lacking and I like it...I like that my payments are secure and continuous. Having social security, helped with my parents and now with my family, it is mostly for them, I have never used it, but I am becoming older and illnesses could start” (SO8).

Within the payment and benefits issue, another matter arose during the interviews, and it related to overtime. Security officers in Monterrey like to work overtime as a way to earn more money, and besides liking when it is paid on time, they appreciate the chance to be scheduled to work extra hours, or to work on their days off. Also, some companies have the policy of allowing their employees to work a shift out of their regular working shifts to make up for their absences from work. In this case they do not get paid a double wage, but the security officer does not lose bonuses paid for productivity and good attendance record. Some excerpts about the issue are:

“Absences to work could be recovered with work” (SO1).

“I pay my absences with overtime” (SO2).

“In other companies they pay overtime one or two months after, in my company they pay them the next pay day” (SO5).

Along with being well treated, being paid in full and on time, and getting all mandatory benefits, the security officers related that they also like to feel that their companies support them in personal issues such as described below.

**Company support.** Another one of the resulting themes, regarding the best things that the security officers find in their companies, related to the support they feel they have. This support refers to getting personal loans or permissions to leave during personal emergencies or special situations.

Workers in Mexico expect be supported by their companies when they have a special need, especially regarding their family, because for Mexican people family is first. This is a part of the country's collectivist dimension (Borycki et al., 1998; Peterson et al., 2003).

Some quotations about this supporting issue are:

"They give you a hand, in the case of a relative's illness; they open the door for you (referring to personal money loans)" (SO1).

"When I had to take my wife to the hospital, they gave me permission... also one day when I got a telephone call telling me that one of my daughters was very ill, I immediately called the supervisor and he told me: ok go I'll get your replacement" (SO2).

"I have seen that when other work mates have a problem they get the permission to leave" (SO3).

"My company supports me in everything, in personal issues when I faced an emergency I called them asking for help (referring to an economic aid) and I have never had a negative answer...when I needed to be with my family, they have given me permission to be absent" (SO4).

The former paragraphs and quotations deal with issues related to the companies where the security officers work, that directly impacted their feelings towards the company. Another theme that emerged in the first round of responses was related to the companies' image and it is explained below.

**Company's image.** This theme refers to comments that two security officers made, that have a direct impact in their personal needs and feelings,

regarding their perception of the company's image. One refers to his first impressions upon starting work in his current company, he expressed:

"I got a very good impression when I entered the job, as I am a serious and responsible person, I liked the company, the image, everything was well coordinated, and I said it looks like a serious and responsible company, so let's work hard for the company, I started working in another company but I immediately left it, because we did not have social security and they did not pay well" (SO8).

Regarding the same theme, another security officer said:

"In all the services that I have been, there has been discipline" (SO3).

Up to now we have been dealing with themes related to issues pertaining to the companies where the interviewed security officers work. Even though they are well paid, well treated, feel supported and respect their employers, there are other important matters that also contribute to the security officers' job satisfaction. Among these matters are the next presented category's results, corresponding to the job itself.

**Factors found in the job itself.** This category presents the results obtained regarding the issues that security officers shared that they like having (or not having as is the case with stress) or enjoy about the job or the position that they perform. The themes that emerged in this category were: (a) supervisor, (b) finding meaning in the job, (c) workmates and teamwork, (d) service to others, (e) recognition and, (f) stress. Below, a brief description of each theme and excerpts of the answers that support the inclusion of the theme are presented.

**Supervision.** Supervision is a very important part of the security officers' life. In most of the cases supervisors are the only link between the employing

company and the employee, because security officers work directly at the client's facilities not at their companies' premises.

Security officers could have several supervisors, depending on the way that their companies organize this function. Regularly, supervisors work in shifts, as security officers do, but sometimes the shift distribution does not allow for one person to always supervise the same security officer. That is the reason why there could be more than one supervisor for one security officer.

Also, supervisors have to oversee the work of many security officers, spread among ample distances, so their contact with the security officers is limited to a short amount of time per shift. Thus, supervisors have to make a great effort to make their people feel supported at every moment, even though they are not present.

Depending on the organizational structure and size of the company, there is a position named coordinator that is the supervisor's boss; the supervisor position usually refers to a roving supervisor, or a person that has to go visit various security officers during a shift or within a geographical area; in some owner managed companies, even the owner might perform some supervision functions.

Regarding this theme, the responses that emerged during the interviews were classified in two subthemes: (a) attention and treatment, and (b) support.

*Supervisor's attention and treatment.* Regarding this issue, the security officers expressed that they feel at ease with their supervisor's attention and treatment. Some quotations that support this result are:

"I feel comfortable with my superiors; I do not have anything to say about my supervisor, my coordinator (the supervisor boss), or the owner. When one is attended well by the superiors, one has to be loyal and work well...If I make a mistake it is logical that I am scolded. My supervisor is a very natural person" (SO1).

"The supervisor really listens to us" (SO2).

"I like that my supervisor tells me: work hard and the first chance there is you'll be promoted to supervisor...I do not like to play with my supervisor, I have to respect him" (SO3).

"The treatment supervisor-security officer is perfect, I should say, excellent" (SO4).

"With the supervisor and the coordinator (supervisor's boss) I get along very well" (SO5).

"He is a very friendly person, he is so natural, and we talk a lot. I have stayed in the company mostly for the supervisors' treatment (SO6).

"It is easy to get along with the supervisors of my company, they are very friendly, and they try to communicate more with us (the security officers). With them I have the chance to talk about my problems and that makes me feel well. If they cannot get a solution to my problems at least they had the time to listen to me. That has kept me comfortable" (SO7).

"The company recently changed my supervisor. From my former supervisor what I liked the most is that there was a lot of fellowship, a good work ambiance, everything was good. I am adapting now to my current supervisor, I think he is good, he used to be a security officer and he is growing in the company" (SO8).

*Supervisor's Support.* As it was formerly explained, security officers spend most of their time working by themselves, as their supervisor just visit them for short periods of time during the working shift. An important feature about supervision is that security officers may feel that their supervisor is always available to support them in case of an unexpected event or an emergency at work. In this research, there were responses expressing that security officers

have this support whenever they need it. Some quotations about these opinions are:

“If I have a problem, I talk to my supervisor and he helps me or connects me to the person responsible in the company...in the office they treat me well” (SO1).

“When I have a problem at work I call the shift supervisor, or the supervisor, they always help me to solve it. If I need something from the company I turn to my shift supervisor and he calls whoever it is needed to get my problem solved” (SO3).

“When I have a problem, I talk to my supervisor or to the office and I always get support” (SO4).

“In case I have a problem, I call my supervisor and he supports me. When I need something from the office they get to the coordinator and they attend to me” (SO6).

“In case of a problem, I call the supervisors, and they support me or tell me what to do” (SO7).

**Meaning.** In this research, this construct deals with the significance that security officers find in their positions, represented by their perception about the contribution that they are making to fulfill their employing companies' and the client's goals, which is an important part of job satisfaction. The results show that the interviewees have a clear understanding of their contribution to their companies. They are aware of their responsibility to keep the company's client and get good referrals that attract more clients.

Following, some excerpts are presented that support this result.

*Contribution to company.*

“...treating people well, the company where I perform my job depends on its customers, and also they will recommend me (referring to his employing company)” (SO1).

“With my presence, not missing work, and not disappointing the bosses, I have been very responsible” (SO2).

“Doing a good job it could be possible that it is recommended (the company), I work in the headquarters and if they have any other subsidiaries with security officers from other companies, maybe they will recommend us (the company) and we will earn more confidence. That is good because we earn more services and that is beneficial” (SO3).

“(I contribute to my company) in that there aren’t any complaints about me, I try to do my best at work, client asks the company for a good service, and if there are any complaints about the security officer obviously we are wrong. I always try to be in good terms with the client and the company” (SO4).

“With my work, they (the company) are proud of me, they (the company) deserve what I am giving, also they wonder how the client could stand me” (SO5).

“In my way of being, my behavior is the same, I have never been arrogant, I have always been manageable, reasonable, and I do what is assigned to me, I do not miss work, I am not late” (SO6).

“That I remain at 100 in my work, so my company would not be affected. I am representing my company and solve problems when I can. I do not give any problems to my company, if there is something tough I pass it along to my supervisor” (SO8).

One security officer expressed that although at the time of the interview he was not feeling very comfortable with the company, he supports it by working extra time, while he waited for his relief. In this case, the situation is that the security officer has to be driven to his current position, because there is no public transportation to get there. He has to be early in the company’s office in order to be commuted, but is not always released on time when he finishes his shift. He expressed the following:

“Right now I am not very happy, because I am there when they need me, but when I need them they are not... I have to wait almost an hour for my relief, and I am supporting them (the company) without wanting to. I am



not highly supportive now, things before were different because when I really supported the company, they did the same with me” (SO7).

*Contribution to client.* Security officers have a double commitment, they represent their employing company and may work well in order to keep the client satisfied, but in many instances they also represent the client as they are the first person to have contact with the client’s customers and visitors. Therefore, it is possible to say, they are part of the client’s image.

This research shows that security officers have a clear idea of their duties as custodians of clients’ assets and employees, as well as being the client’s first personal contact with outsiders. Some quotations supporting this result are shown below:

“Paying attention, demonstrating good character, treating customers well, our client depends on its customers” (SO1).

“Protecting children, I feel good taking care of them” (SO2).

“To the client simply observing what is happening outside, one has to focus outside not only inside” (SO3).

“With the attention to people, because in my position we treat many people, the client asks the company for a good service, obviously the customer is the client of our client” (SO4).

“There are a lot of things to protect, the interests of the person who hired us...the physical integrity of the client’s personnel and the client’s facilities” (SO5).

“The treatment one gives to visitors, if one behaves bad or arrogantly the customers (of the client) will say goodbye and not come back again” (SO6).

“I cooperate with the client because my duty is security and surveillance of the personnel, I have found many illicit things and I have had the courage to report them, most importantly, using good judgment at work, talking with the client and not hiding anything” (SO7).

“My service is security, that’s what we are doing” (SO8).

***Service to others.*** When talking about their duties and responsibilities some of the interviewed security officers mentioned that their work is to serve others, and that they enjoy performing their activities because they like to help people. This issue was also mentioned among the responses to the security officer’s perceived contributions to the client. Some excerpts from these conversations are quoted below:

“I feel good with my current job, my work is to serve others, and when I serve others I feel good” (SO2).

“I enjoy communicating with people, and communication leads me to serve others... the courtesy to give directions to where they are going” (SO4).

“I like to be in contact with people, that is nice, being in touch with my workmate, with client’s suppliers, and with client employees, for me that’s good” (SO6).

“I have the experience to solve problems; I know how to treat people from the lowest to the highest levels, simply being kind you disarm people, I enjoy serving and dealing with people” (SO8).

***Work mates and team work.*** For Mexican workers friendships gained with work mates are essential to work satisfaction; these relationships enhance their commitment to the organization. Therefore, longer tenure and more productivity could be expected when these issues are reasonably covered (Borycki et al., 1998; Lovett et al., 2006; Najera, 2008; Peterson et al., 2003).

The results of this research show that having good relationships and working in teams is a factor that the security officers appreciate in their companies and positions. Some quotations about the matter are presented below. It is important to keep in mind that even though these results refer to

workmates, the aspect of friendship and good relationships also arose in the section related to supervision.

“I enjoy being with my workmates because we get along well, we help each other, we divide the work load, we support each other, we are friends and it makes the time go faster” (SO1).

“I feel comfortable with my workmate because I feel more secure. Even though he is younger, we get along well. (In past positions) When I worked with others, what I liked about my workmates was that we dialogued, we understood each other well, we were a team, we worked hard together” (SO2).

“I like that all of us (workmates) get along well, we are friendly and respectful...at work we help each other... sometimes we train the new ones...if one of us has a moment with a huge workload we help him to do his work” (SO3).

“I work by myself, but I have a good relationship with my reliefs, I just tell them: do not fail to be on time to make our change of guard because I have all my time scheduled and if you are late I will not be able to do what I wanted” (SO4).

“I work by myself, someone has to relieve me at the night shift...I get along well with all of them (the reliefs) because as there is not a high turnover they are not so many” (SO5).

“We are two workmates in different places (within the same facility)...we are in constant communication to complement our function (SO6).

“I like to be in a work team where a good coordination exists...everyone has to do his job... I do not like making mistakes because I rely in my mate's work too and it is not right. We always try to keep the control like a team dividing the work equitably, we coordinate and we talk and visit each other during the shift (various security officers in different places within the same facility)” (SO7).

“I am alone in my place, I have another mate in a different place (within the same facility) we have communication regarding the work, personal issues aside, we coordinate well, there are small details but we get over them, we get along well” (SO8).

These quotations make it possible to appreciate that security officers find having good work relationships as well as a good working team important.

Another factor that was explored during the interviews was stress. The term is defined below, and the results obtained from the exploration of this issue are presented.

**Stress.** This construct refers to the stress generated by job and work related activities (Ahr & Ahr, 2000; Griffeth et al., 2000; Lloyd, 2000), coincide in signaling stress as a source of dissatisfaction in a job, as well as a cause for resignation.

When security officers were questioned about how stressful were their jobs, the common answer was that, in general, they are not stressful. They agreed that they may feel stressed at times when the workload is high, or when an unexpected event occurs, but that this is an exception and not the commonality of their positions. The following quotations support this result.

“For me my current position is not stressful, because I move from one place to another, I am not in a single place, in my last position I really was stressed because for almost three years I was by myself, now I have more to do” (SO1).

“This work is not very stressful, the only hard thing is the weather when it is hot, but saying that I become stressed, definitely not” (SO2).

“Work does not have a lot of stress, because one gets engrossed doing his job, a lot of people say that being a security officer is stressful, because they have to be standing for 12 hours, but I think there are more stressful positions” (SO3).

“No, my work is not stressful, if it were, I had left it some time ago, I like it, I entered the security field because I needed a job, but it started liking me and that is why I am still in my job” (SO4).

“No it is not stressful, because I never get bored” (SO5).

“My job is stressful at times when the workload is high, or when an unexpected situation occurs, but in general it is not stressful, I even have moments when I get amused, I feel at ease” (SO7).

“No I do not feel stressed, one has to take it easy, suddenly some pressures come, but I have the capacity to solve them, and if not, to inform the right person to solve the problem” (SO8).

At this point, it could be stated that the interviewed security officers experience job satisfaction because they feel that with their work they are making a contribution, giving a service to others, and because they have good relationships with workmates and supervisors. Also, that they feel that their jobs are not stressful. In other words, in their jobs they find various elements that make them feel comfortable with their positions.

Another factor that is important for job satisfaction is the recognition that people get in their jobs. The next part of this work presents the results obtained when this issue was explored.

**Recognition.** Literature reports that for Mexican workers is important to receive some personal or organizational based self-esteem (Borycki et al.,1998; Peterson et al., 2003).

Regarding this issue, the results obtained in the exploration show that security officers like to be recognized for a well done job, and they get this recognition both from their employing companies and from the clients.

Security officers expressed that they feel recognized when they have a good amount of permanence in a position, or when after changing clients they are required to come back.

Some excerpts from the interviews that support these results are:

“It makes me feel good when I get recognition or when they say this man works well” (SO1).

“I have a boss that recognizes me; he says that I am a good element” (SO1).

“Simply with a greeting, they (the client) demonstrate to you that one is behaving well, greetings come from executives and others” (SO2).

“When you do a good job, everybody watches you and they say he is a good element, one works harder and they say (The client) this is my man, he is trustworthy, sometimes, I’ve been congratulated for my work even though sometimes people got mad at me because I am strict, they see you as a security officer and do not respect you” (SO3).

“They have congratulated me, even visitors or the client, and that makes me feel satisfied and mostly that I am doing things well” (SO4).

“The client is proud that I am not a troublemaker, I have twelve years in that spot, they change companies, but not me. I am proud that they (the client) do not have any complaint about me, and that makes me say to myself I shall stay here” (SO5).

“Now (the client) he says to me, “guard: take care” once I asked for a change and after two months the client asked my company to bring me back, the client knows that I am helpful because I take care of his job” (SO6).

“It is not from the company (the recognition), what motivates me is that where I had been sent to work, the persons, the clients recognize the effort I put in my work and I get more thanks from them, than from my company. I have three years in the same service, and I have asked for a change to avoid boredom, but the client asked me to come back, it is what motivates me to work better, it is not because I am in this company, it is because of the place where I go to work, they tell me that I am doing a good job and that is what has kept me” (SO7).

“They like my service (the client), they feel comfortable, my service is protection that is what I am doing, and when they are not satisfied they will send me away” (SO8).

Another aspect, that could influence the security officers decision to remain in their companies is the one related to the expectations they have for their future in their employing companies.

**Future.** When security officers were asked about their expectations for the future in their employing companies, two different sets of answers were obtained. Some security officers say that they expect a promotion in their companies, and some other related that their goal for the future is retirement.

The following excerpts express the opinions given about the opportunity to advance in the company:

“I see it (the future) going well, because I am working, there is nothing missing in the economic aspect, I could make some over time and get some extra money, to pay for commuting... I feel that suddenly I could get a better position in the company” (SO1).

“I see it going well; I like to personally grow and teach people because there are a lot of people that come to work as security officers and do not know anything about the job. I do not like that the new ones are scolded, once I was also new and started learning, and now I teach others” (SO3).

“Company has grown, and I think I have grown with it, I started working here when I was younger but I am satisfied with the work that I have done and I believe that someday I will have the expertise that gives me better opportunities” (SO4).

“In the company we have a good future, the company is looking for more clients, and having more clients means having more money, right now the company has few clients, we have lost some of them, but I believe that we are going to recover and tomorrow or the day after tomorrow I could become a supervisor” (SO6).

It is important to mention that according to Mexican Regulations (Ley del Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social, 1995) when workers want to retire they have to be 65 years old and have about 625 weeks of being affiliated to the social security system; for this reason, some employees want to keep their jobs until they meet the condition to retire.

The following quotations are the ones that refer to the fact that some of the interviewees are working towards their retirement:

“(The future) It is something that I think about a lot. Sometimes I have made some decisions about it, but ended up not following through with them, I think that there is no growth for the future, but my hope is to get a good retirement, and I worry about the fact that if I leave this job maybe I will not find another where I could make my living” (SO7).

“I want stability, and to get to the end (retirement), I have less problems if I have stability instead of searching for things that may not be for me. There may be some people who have more than me, but they are not stable, I feel proud of being stable” (SO5).

“My job helps me to grow, but I do not see a future promotion, I do not know if there could be some promotions, I do not see anything coming. I’d like to continue working here until my retirement, I feel good at this job and it allows me to do other activities to earn more money” (SO8).

Until now, the results regarding what the researcher considered as factors that security officers find in their companies and job that make them stay in their companies for more than a year have been presented.

Summarizing this section, it could be said that security officers like to be paid full and on time; they also appreciate the support that their companies give them when they need a special permission to be absent from work, or require a personal loan.

These security officers feel comfortable when treated well by their companies’ personnel and supervising teams. They also appreciate the quality of the personal relationships with people around them. Furthermore, they enjoy working in well-built teams.

They are clear about the contributions that they are making, to the welfare of their employing companies as well as the client’s. Among other things, they feel recognized when they stay in a position for a long time, or when clients ask for their return after being moved.



Some of them expect to grow in the future. The ones who do not have this expectation want to continue in their companies because they are affiliated to the Mexican Social Security system and are waiting to meet the requirements to retire.

According to Figure 2, the area of resultant factors related to the organization is complete, and now the results corresponding to the personal area will be set forth.

### **Results about Personal Factors**

This area portrays the findings regarding the themes that impact the person as a human being, and that could be controlled or manipulated by the security officers. The categories that are included in this area are: (a) balance between job and personal life and interests, (b) discipline, (c) finding meaning in the job and creating self-esteem (d) personal relationships, and (e) family.

The first question during the interviews was intended to explore the opinions that the security officer's families have regarding their jobs. The rationale behind this line of inquiry and the results that were obtained are presented below.

**Family's opinion about the security officers' job.** As this research was conducted in Mexico with Mexican subjects, it is worth noting that the cultural characteristics of the participants undoubtedly influence the type of inquiry and the results obtained in this process. According to Hofstede's (1997) cultural dimensions, Mexico has a collectivist culture, where workers seem to be committed to family and friends first, work second (Borycki et al., 1998; Peterson

et al., 2003). Wasti (2003) further alludes to the fact that, in collectivist cultures, the approval or disapproval of family is an important predictor of turnover. For this reason, a question regarding the opinion that the interviewees' families have about their current job as security officers was included on the interviews.

Within the answers to this question, the researcher noted that the masculine dimension of Mexican culture emerged, as it relates to the providing role that men play in masculine cultures: versus the feminine role that places the women in charge of their home (Hofsetde, 1997; Najera, 2008; Peterson et al., 2003). Therefore, the answers related to the family's acceptance of the security officer's job, in some cases, were related to their need for sustenance.

In this research, four of the eight interviewees responded that their families completely supported their position; one referred to some discomfort from his wife; two others mentioned their family's fear regarding the insecure environment that currently prevails in Monterrey, counteracted by the idea that this job was a way to provide the family sustenance; and another officer stated that his family does not want him to work, but that he continues working because he needs to earn money and due to his age it is difficult to find another job.

Some answers to this question were:

"My mother told me: it is better that you work as a security officer in a good company, than to be jumping from one job to another" (SO3).

"They accept my job because they see that it is helping us make a living" (SO7).

"My children are young, and they are proud of their father being a security officer, they brag about it with their friends...my wife is also proud, because she sees that other men are not stable in their jobs like I am.... also, she likes that I have a legal job" (SO5).

“They accept my job. I started working as a security officer because one of my sons recommended me to company where he was working in the same position” (SO6).

“They think well about the job, because it is our sustenance, they do not have any complaint, they support me in what I do. They only want me to be careful” (SO4).

“My kids do not want me to work due to the danger that we are currently living, but I am still working because I like my work and have to earn money, I do not want to depend on them” (SO2).

My family thinks well, the only inconvenience is that I live far from the city, they worry about the insecurity problem, but they have never told me to leave my job” (SO1).

The one who mentioned that his family disagrees with his job said:

“My wife creates obstacles to put in my way and maybe she is right, there are many working hours and I cannot spend time with family. She wants me to look for another job” (SO8).

It can be appreciated that in most cases the responses from the security officers were positive, meaning that they have the acceptance from their families; situation that for Mexicans is important, and could be a factor that contribute to their staying in their companies. Still, there are other intrinsic aspects that lead to job satisfaction. The next issue that was explored is the balance between the job and personal interests of the security officers.

**Balance between work and personal life and interests.** This topic explores the security officer’s perceptions about the compatibility between their personal lives and interests and their job. The answers to this question were related to (a) the time they were able to spend with their families, especially on Sundays, the most common day for families to meet in Mexico; (b) the discipline and good habits that the security officers have acquired through their jobs; (c) the

learning experiences that the job has brought to them; and (d) the possibility of having extra earnings in activities performed during their time off. In the next paragraphs, a brief explanation is given of each of these elements along with quoted statements that support them.

***Time to spend with family.*** In Mexico Sundays are considered the traditional day to be with family. Some security officers whose working shifts allow them to rest on these days expressed the following:

“As Sundays are my days off, I use them to visit my family” (SO2).

“I have the chance to be with my family on Sundays, even if we stay home, I want to be with them” (SO5).

“I program everything, my work, my social life, meaning my relationships with my family and work mates: I program everything, time and money for everything, and I do not stir off from that program. That is the reason why I have stayed in the company, because they support my way of thinking, that is why I feel comfortable here” (meaning that he dislikes working on Sundays, and likes to always be released on time”(SO4).

Security officers regularly work in shifts, and are not always allowed to have a fixed day off. In such cases, officers mentioned other benefits they perceive that contribute to their personal development. These benefits are described next.

***Learning at job.*** One security officer said that thanks to his job he has learned how to better relate to his family:

“Here at work, one learns how to treat people, and it is the same treatment that I give to my family. It helps me a lot to know how to treat people, how to direct them, my job consists of interviewing people, and what I have learned has helped me a lot. Learning from others is what makes me get ahead, do my job well...learning from security officers that come from other parts and who know more than me ” (SO6).

Besides the good experience that learning represents, some other interviewees referred to the discipline they gained through their work, which had allowed them to become better persons.

***Discipline gained through work.*** Some excerpts on the subject of these changes in habits and personal discipline are:

“In my personal life it has made me more responsible, not missing work, being on time, doing my duties correctly, in general the discipline” (SO3).

“My work matches well with my life, because when I get home I do not drink (alcoholic beverages) as I used to do (SO1).

Another benefit that security officers obtain from their positions is that they can perform other jobs on their days off, therefore being able to earn some extra money.

***Opportunities to earn extra money.*** One of the interviewed subjects expressed, at the beginning of the interview, disliking that the daily hours that he works do not give time to do personal activities. By the end of the interview, however, he said that his current job allowed him to manage his small business, and perform some other activities where he earns extra money:

“Practically this job does not allow me to do personal activities, things are so fast...besides this job I own a small grocery store, I sacrifice myself to combine them, I work at night and take care of the business in the mornings...I grew up in the construction field, so sometimes I also do some small jobs in that area” (SO8).

Those were the results obtained in the interviews related to extrinsic and intrinsic factors that people find in their companies that contribute to their staying.

In order to get some more information about what security officers like or would like to have in their companies, the researcher included a question which

allowed the interviewees to articulate a narrative of what they would like to tell the owner. The results of this exploration appear in the next section.

### **Results of the Area Suggestions to the Owner or CEO**

One of the issues aroused through this question was that security officers would appreciate having more communication with the owners or CEO's of their companies, in order to perform their job better and to know more about how things were going in the company. Some quotations on that subject are:

“That we have more communication, the lack of communication affects us, sometimes there is going to be an event and they do not tell us so we can be prepared...that they would take into account our needs” (SO2).

“They are the foundation of the company, they must take the initiative to talk to people and tell them how things are going” (SO8).

Another security officer expressed some dissatisfaction with his company because he has not had the support he feels that he deserves or was promised.

The quotation is:

“I would tell the owner that we have to work like a team, that we must have good communication, and above all availability [of money for loans], they need us and we need them, when I say availability I mean [economic] support because honestly we have not had it when we needed it, honestly we do not have things that they promised us like the personal loans we used to have” (SO7).

Regarding economic support, one security officer said that he would like the company to help pay for his commute, as he lives far away from the city. He expressed:

“He could help me with money for transportation, I like my job and I work overtime to get more money” (SO1).

Security officers like to work overtime, because it is a way to earn more money, one officer stated that the payment for overtime should be increased:

“Overtime pay has been the same for a long time and there are times when one cannot even pay for transportation, they may take that more into account, some workmates have told me the same thing” (SO2).

Another suggestion made by a security officer related to the hiring of more experienced people, or implementing better training programs, he said:

“Someone has to be hired to train people, in the company they hire inexperienced people and it needs more investment, they have to train the security officers, teach them all” (SO3).

Related to the hiring of security officers one expressed:

“I will say that if they love their company they have to select the security officers that they hire better... we all are good security officers, the only thing is to direct us... there are lots of security officers that just come and go, they break the balance of the chain, if a link is broken the chain does not work and that happens because they do not interview the people that they are going to hire well...they just come one day to get their social security affiliation... and those persons are wrong and spoil what is right” (SO8).

Others just used the opportunity to express their thankfulness for working in the company, some quotations are:

“Thank you for hiring me, because from here I am making my family's living (SO6).

“I cannot say anything but thanks for the support that he has given to me like a friend, like a person, I am so thankful, I am very satisfied with him” (SO4).

And one said that he would like to be moved to a position with more responsibility: “I would like to be in a position with more responsibilities, even though it could be more dangerous” (SO5).

After exploring what the security officers would like to say to their companies' owners or CEO's, the researcher inquired about why the subjects

had accepted to participate in the study, a summary of these results is presented below.

### **Results for the Area of Reasons for Accepting to Participate in the Study**

There were several reasons given by the security officers for wanting to participate in the study; the most common among them related to the subject's need to talk to someone. The quotations that support this issue are:

“Because I like to express myself, expression is free and if you had asked something else I would have responded” (SO4).

“I accepted because sometimes I feel good talking to other people, to pour out what one has inside” (SO2).

“Sometimes I have the need to express my personal things to someone, what I have said here I would not tell anyone else, sometimes other people do not understand why I stand up for twelve hours a day” (SO5).

One security officer said that the reason why he had accepted to participate was mere curiosity:

“Mostly I wanted to know what this was about” (SO1).

Another security officer said that he accepted because he was curious to know what the research was about and also because he likes to learn new things:

“Most of all the curiosity, and that I learn from [experiencing] other things” (SO7).

Another security officer expressed that he was motivated by idea of helping the researcher in his work:

“It got my attention that you are studying a doctorate and conducting a research, I like to cooperate, and say what it is” (SO3).

One expressed:



“Because I have nothing against my company, I am comfortable working there, and I had no impediment to participate” (SO6).

Another expressed that he accepted to participate because he learns from experiencing new things, as he said:

“One learns more from [experiencing] other things and I like to learn new things” (SO8).

The last question that was asked before closing the interviews was intended to capture if the subjects had learned something during the process. The results are presented below.

### **Results of Learning Acquired from the Interview**

Five of the eight security officers interviewed answered that they had not learned anything. The other three expressed the following thoughts:

“I am proud of what I have learned today about myself, sometimes I see problems with other security officers or policemen and I say, I do not know why they are in those positions because they treat people bad” (SO5).

“I learned about harmony, I realized that I feel good when I talk” (SO2).

“This was very good (the interview) nobody had ever asked these questions, I am realizing what I like or dislike about my company” (SO7).

Up to now, a narrative has been presented that explains the results obtained in the research; classified in the areas, categories, themes and subthemes that were mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. In order to facilitate the appreciation of these results four tables with the summary of the data are presented further on.

## **Summary of the Results**

Four tables that portray the results of the study in a summarized way are included below. Table 2 presents the summary of results obtained for the organizational area, showing in the first column the name of the category; the second column portrays the names of the themes and subthemes that emerged from each category; the third column shows a brief description of the perceptions of the security officers about the respective theme or subtheme; the last column shows the number of times that the referred theme was mentioned.

Table 3 presents the summary of the results obtained for the personal areas. Results are organized in the same way as they are on Table 2.

Table 4 presents the summary of the results obtained from the area of suggestions to the owner. This table presents in its first column the themes that emerged during the interviews; in the second column its presents a description of the related items; the third presents the number of times that the item was mentioned.

From the results obtained in the research it is possible to state that security officers consider their jobs as a means to provide money to sustain themselves and their family. For this reason, their jobs are accepted by their families.

In the economic area security officers perceive that their companies support them by paying salaries full and on time and giving all mandatory benefits; also by allowing them to have permissions to miss work and get personal loans to fulfill some extraordinary family responsibilities.

Along with the economic benefits, security officers said that their companies treat them well, issue that includes all levels of management and supervision. Also, they know that their companies will support them, through the supervisors, in case of an emergency or an extraordinary event. The companies and jobs are also a means for personal development, recognition, and sources of relationships with others.

On the subject of relationships, they state that they like to work with other security officers and to be supported by their teams and /or their mates. Also, they appreciate having meaningful relationships with people, and through these relationships be of service to others, as a part of their job. They perceive that with their security work they are making contributions to their companies and clients, and are recognized by both constituencies. They classify their job as not being stressful. The only expressed stress was the one that arose due to extraordinary events. They feel secure about the future because they perceive that they could get some advancement in their companies, or expect their retirement.

Table 4 presents the summary of the results obtained from the area of suggestions to the owner. This table presents in its first column the themes that emerged during the interviews; in the second column it presents a description of the related items; in the third, the number of times that the item was mentioned. Regarding the suggestions that the security officers wanted to give to the owners or CEO's of their companies, the most recurrent theme was about communication; they would like to be informed about issues pertaining to the company and they like to feel like a part of the company team. They would like to

be informed about special events, so they could be prepared for them and perform their job better.

In other words, they feel that through their work they are making a contribution to their companies and the clients, and they wouldn't want a lack of communication to damage that contribution.

Table 2

*Summary of Results of Organizational Factors*

Category	Theme	Definition	Times mentioned
Company	Treatment	Getting good treatment as persons	5
	Payment and Benefits	Full and on time	6
	Support	Loans and permissions	4
	Image	Discipline	2
Job	Supervision	Good treatment	8
		Support	5
	Meaning	Contribution to company	
		As referral	2
		With work	7
		Contribution to Client	
		In security duties	5
		In attention to persons	3
	Service to Others	Enjoy serving others	4
	Workmates and Team working	Like to work in teams	5
		Like to work with others	2
		Like friendship with mates	3
	Stress at work	No stress	8
	Recognition	By client	3
		By company	6

(continued)

Category	Theme	Description	Times Mentioned
	Promotions	In company	3
Future	Growth	Personal	1
	Retirement	Expecting for retirement	3

Table 3

*Summary of the Results about Personal Factors*

Category	Theme	Description	Times mentioned
Family's opinion about the job	Acceptance of the job	Completely accepts	4
		Accepts with restrictions but as a way to provide money	2
		Show discomfort	1
		Do not want the security officer to work	1
Work-Life and Interests Balance	Time spend with families	Acceptable	3
	Learning at job	Helps to better relate with family	1
	Discipline gained thru work	Responsibility	2
	Good habits	Stop drinking alcohol	1
	Opportunities to earn extra money	Manages own business	1

Also, as a part of the company team, they would like to be informed about the situation of the company and its expected future performance, because their living depends on the welfare of the company.

One security officer, SO7, expressed that he would like to tell the owner that the company was not accomplishing the things they had promised in the past regarding economic support for its employees. The other items of the table will not be further explained in this section because they are clearly defined.

Table 4

*Summary of the Results Related to the Area of Suggestions to Owner or CEO*

Theme	Approach	Times mentioned
Communication	Increase communication and team work with security officers	4
Payments	Raise the amount paid for overtime	1
	Give support for transportation	1
	More training to new employees	1
New Employees	Better selection of new employees	1
Change of position	Wanting a better position	1
Thanks	Thankful for having a job	2
Support	Increase economic support for security officers	1

Table 5 shows the summary of the results concerning the reasons why the security officers accepted to participate in the study.

Table 5

*Summary of the Results about the Reasons to Participate*

Reason to participate	Number of times mentioned
Need to talk to someone	3
Curiosity	1
Curiosity and learning	1
Learning	1
Help the researcher	1
Having nothing to hide	1

It is worth noting in this table the need security officers have to talk to somebody else, besides their regular relationships, as well as their attitude towards learning through new experiences.

Results about the learning obtained through the interview are not shown in a table due to the scarcity of data. Only three security officers answered as having learned something. The summary of these results is presented below:

1. Learning about himself.
2. Learning about what he likes or dislikes from his employing company.
3. Learning about harmony in the conversation.

Up to now, the results obtained in the semi structured interviews done to eight security officers in Monterrey Mexico have been presented. The next chapter presents the researcher's conclusions, recommendations are made for further studies in order to widen the results, and some suggestions directed to the managers of contracted security officers companies in order to increase the rate of retention of their employees.

## **Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter presented the results of the exploration about the factors that contracted security officers, with more than year tenure, have found in their companies that have made them stay working with their employing companies.

These factors were divided in three main areas. The findings that related to the company dealt with the treatment that the security officers get from their company's personnel including the supervision team; the support they get when they face family emergencies; and getting their payments on time as well as all the mandatory benefits.

Regarding the job, they perceive that with their work they contribute to the welfare of their employing companies as well as the client's; they find recognition through the employers, clients and outsiders.

Another one of the areas explored was the one related to the person. In this area the results indicated that all of them have their families' acceptance of the job; they find in their work a means to make a living, and also for personal growth.

Regarding their expected future in their employing companies, some could see some growing opportunities, and others manifest their need to continue working until retirement.

In the study, the participants were also asked about suggestions that they would like to make to owners or CEO's of their companies; the most important issue that emerged was related to enhancing communication.



Results also show the answers given to questions regarding the reason why the participants chose to take part in the study, and the learning obtained during the interview.

In the following chapter the researcher presents his conclusions and recommendations based on the results obtained from the study.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions and Comments**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn upon the results of the study. The conclusions are linked to existing theory regarding organization commitment and job satisfaction. The limitations of the study are discussed. The chapter also includes recommendations directed to contracted security officers companies that could help them to increase the levels of job satisfaction of their employees. Finally some lines for future studies in the contracted security officers' field are set forth. As a way of presenting this information to the reader in a more personal and realistic manner, this chapter is written in first person.

It is important to restate to the reader that I had, at the time of the study, more than 25 years of expertise in this industry. Thus, the recommendations are based on the results of the exploration, my expertise, and knowledge gained through studies in organizational issues as well as the findings of this research.

This chapter is written as a narrative explaining the conclusions and linking them to existing theory regarding organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

As an owner of a security company, a colleague in security company-related associations, and principal investigator for this research, I came to this study with the knowledge that there is high turnover in the contracted security officer's industry, as well as a set of assumptions about why contracted security officers remain in, or leave, their jobs. This knowledge (and possibly our

assumptions) dictated how I and colleagues in my industry have managed these employees over the time.

Knowing that there was an opportunity to learn more about the perceptions of security officers and why they remain employed with a company I decided to explore the question: What factors influence contracted security officers in their decision to remain with employers for more than a year?

The participant's responses were illuminating; first yielding surprises, raising my awareness, challenged my assumptions, and will no doubt lead to changes in my company's policies and how we manage employees. Also, the findings corresponded to O'Toole and Lawler's (2006) work descriptors of a good job, that is one that satisfies three fundamental needs: (a) the need to have the basic economic resources and security to live good lives, (b) the need to do a meaningful work and the opportunity to grow and develop as a person, and (c) the need for supportive social relationships.

Below I will share a summary of the findings from the study aligned with O'Toole and Lawler's (2006) assertions. The findings include: (a) security officers appreciate to be paid full and on time, (b) security officers appreciate the care and support they receive from their companies in times of family distress, (c) security officers appreciate good treatment on a day-to-day basis, (d) how security officer's are supervised has a significant impact on security officers, (e) security officers find meaning in their work, (f) security officers' personal traits match with their jobs, (g) security officers value the recognition they receive for the work they do, (h) security officers find the opportunity to grow in their jobs, (i)

security officers value supportive relationships in their jobs, and (j) Security officers receive support from their families. Based on these findings, in the next section I present the six conclusions of my study, the first three aligned with O'Toole and Lawler's (2006) assertions; the remaining three, although not directly aligned with the formerly cited assertions, provide support to them. Conclusions are also related to some of the characteristics of Mexican culture and other theoretical findings.

### **Conclusions of the Study**

**Conclusion 1.** Security Officers had decided to remain in their companies because their basic economic needs were fulfilled and they have the security to live good lives. In this research, seven of the eight interviewees counted on their job as the only way to make money, and appreciated that their companies were respectful of issuing compensation on the scheduled dates. Mexican culture is an uncertainty avoidance one (Hofstede, 1997); making certain that employees receive their monies on a fixed day increases employee satisfaction, as was demonstrated in this study.

Security officer's wages are not high; however, this study found that they did not complain about the quantity of their earnings. Instead, they looked for, and accepted, chances to make more money by working overtime or the opportunity to work on their days off in order to recover from loss of income due to work absences; this practice was highly appreciated by them.

Furthermore, Mexican culture is a collectivist one (Hofstede, 1997); therefore family is the first concern and family issues are priorities. The security

officers' employers demonstrated caring by allowing their employees to be absent from work, with the opportunity of not affecting their earnings, and also with some economic aid in case of unexpected family events, mostly regarding illnesses.

This conclusion also supports the findings obtained in a study of Mexican security officer's absenteeism performed by the researcher (De los Santos, 2006), where family issues were the second most cited cause of absences from work, just behind short term illnesses of the employee.

**Conclusion 2.** Security Officers had decided to remain in their companies because they do a meaningful job and have the opportunity to grow and develop as persons. Contracted Security officers that participated in the study found meaning in their jobs by satisfactorily accomplishing their dual responsibility of representing their employing companies and in many cases being the first contact outsiders interact with when they visit client's facilities.

I arrived at this conclusion because the participants of the study recognized that their jobs represented a contribution both to the client and to their employing companies. They felt that through performing their jobs well, they are helping their employing companies to either to grow or retain their current clients. They felt, as well, that they were making a contribution to the clients' welfare by fulfilling their security duties with diligence and by treating their visitors well.

Among Mexican workers getting recognition and organizational based self-esteem is a main contributor for job satisfaction (Borycki et al., 1998; Chinen & Enomoto, 2004; Lovett et al., 2006; Najera 2008; Peterson et al., 2003). This

study shows that the security officers' good performance at work is recognized by their companies and clients. They felt gratified when they know that clients do not want them to leave their position, or when the client asks for their return when they have been assigned to another post. This recognition motivated them to stay.

In addition, participants in the study also liked their job because it gave them the opportunity to learn, to be more disciplined and responsible, and because their working shifts provided the opportunity to earn more money performing other activities.

**Conclusion 3.** Security Officers had decided to remain in their companies because they have found in them supportive social relationships. In Mexican culture, the dimension of power and distance presents itself as the workers' acceptance of an inequality between them and their superiors. Yet, although they accept that their boss has power, they like to be treated with respect; once this respect is gained, Mexican workers create a strong emotional relationship (Najera, 2008).

Strong emotional relationships are built upon the superior's respect and caring (Najera, 2008; Wingfield & Berry, 2001). In this research, the security officers' expressed opinion was that they were respected by supervisors, company's personnel, and even the owners. Also, officers base their perception that these people care for them based on the efforts made in order to help them to solve their problems.

Furthermore, in this study security officers referred that they are part of effective work teams, and enjoyed having good relationships with their mates. In Mexican culture, the issue of relating well to coworkers plays an important role in job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Borycki et al., 1998; Lovett et al., 2006; Najera, 2008; Peterson et al., 2003).

**Conclusion 4.** Supervision has a high impact on security officers' retention. Another important issue, related with the three conclusions mentioned before, is the way in which employees are supervised. For Mexican workers, the quality of supervision is a matter that contributes to their job satisfaction and commitment to their organizations (Borycki et al., 1998; Peterson et al., 2003). Therefore, supervision is a key factor in contracted security officers' companies because employees are not supervised through the entire shift, but they like to feel supported and listened by their supervisors and companies.

In this study participants expressed that they feel confidence in their companies' supervision response and support. They all reported as well, that they received a good treatment from their supervisors. Their expectation is that supervisors support them, not only in work issues, but also in caring for their personal needs.

**Conclusion 5.** Security officer's personal traits are important when they are assigned to a position. As long as security officers expressed that giving good treatment to outsiders is an important part of their positions and that they enjoy serving others, it is possible to conclude that personal traits are important to fulfill this condition, because not all candidates for a security officer's position

have the ability or the spirit of service as a personal characteristic. In this study security officers distinguish this attitude as a personal characteristic that helps them to be successful in their positions.

**Conclusion 6.** Family Support is a factor that influences retention in companies. In collectivist cultures, including the Mexican, the family's opinion is very important as way to enhance organizational commitment (Wasti, 2003). If an employee's family is not in accordance with her/his job they would exert some pressure in order to force the individual to quit the job.

The results of this study show that families agree with the interviewees' job choice of contracted security officers, meaning that they find support at home and do not have to deal with family inconformity.

Although these six conclusions represent the main frame of the results of my study, it is worthwhile to mention some other results that present important highlights about the security officers' retention.

A result found through the study is that all security officers referred to their position as not stressful. Some of them even expressed that they find it amusing. The researcher concludes that as all of them showed an acceptable degree of job satisfaction, experienced through all the issues that have formerly been described, they do not experience stress.

Feeling well at work may also relate to the tranquility and certainty that the participants feel about their future in the company. There were some different perceptions about the participant's future expectancies; some hope for a promotion while others are waiting for their retirement. Still, none of them stated



that they were planning to leave their organization, because their companies fulfill the conditions to make possible either one of their desires.

The conclusions and results formerly mentioned were aligned to literature in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and Mexican culture. In the following section I would like to describe the correspondence of my findings and conclusions with some empirical studies done in the security officer's field.

### **Correspondence with other Studies in the Security Officers' Field**

Bitzer (2006) recommends that personnel selection processes should include some pre-employment screening and personality tests, in order to hire the best candidates for each position and avoid premature leaving of the job, as was referred in my conclusion about security officers' personal traits. Also, issues referring to treatment, lack of training, and the absence of recognition are mentioned in the studies performed by Goodboe (2002), as factors that influence security officers' decision to leave their jobs.

Among these empirical studies it is also mentioned that job boredom is another cause of the security officer's decision to leave their jobs (Brislin; 1994; Gonzalez, 2006; Goodboe, 2002), but in my study none of the participants expressed that they had a boring position. The conclusion I draw from this is that boredom may be a true cause of job dissatisfaction, because it was not mentioned by the job satisfied security officers that participated in the study.

Based in the conclusions formerly described, and in my expertise in the field, in the next section there are presented some recommendations that could help companies enhance their employees working conditions and permanence.

## **Recommendations for Contracted Security Officers Companies**

Based on the results of the study and my expertise in the contracted security officers' field, I present some recommendations for employing companies regarding the following issues: (a) economic benefits, (b) supervision, (c) awareness of security officers' personal traits, (d) recognition of security officer's good work and behaviors, and (e) promotion of good relationships among employees. Following there is presented a brief explanation of each issue.

**Economic benefits.** Regarding the issue of economic benefits, one recommendation for security officer companies is that they have to be conscientious about the importance that certainty has with their employees, enhanced by paying them their full earnings on time

Also, that they may create a fair policy about working overtime, where all security officers have equal chances of working extra hours, and they get paid for those hours the next payday. Also, companies may revise the amount paid for overtime and keep it updated.

**Supervision.** Another recommendation for contracted security officers companies is that they must pay attention to the effectiveness of their supervision, as defined by the good treatment of subordinate officers, and the support and care supervision provides to employees.

According to my expertise, a common practice in these companies is to promote the best security officers to supervisors, but the reality is that being a good security officer does not always mean that the person will be a good supervisor.

The study showed that some of the participants expect to be promoted to supervisors in their companies. Without a doubt, the possibility of advancement is a good means to create positive hopes in employees. Still, companies should make certain that the newly appointed supervisors are capable of giving a good treatment, support and care for their subordinates.

Therefore, when employing companies plan to hire a new supervisor from the ranks of their current employees, they may choose to give some training regarding the attitudes that an effective supervisor has. It is also a good idea to plan for a way to evaluate these abilities, before giving this person the full responsibility to supervise others.

**Awareness of security officers' personal traits.** Contracted security officers companies have to be aware of the personal characteristics of their employees, in order to find the position that best suits their beliefs and attitudes. This will diminish the discomfort that may arise when people have to perform activities they do not enjoy.

**Recognize security officers' good work and behaviors.** Regarding this issue my recommendation for companies is to make sure that jobs well done or appropriate organizational citizenship behaviors are suitably recognized either by the company or the client. An organizational citizenship behavior is a voluntary action, out of regular work, taken by employees to help their organizations (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006).

**Promote good relationships among employees.** Employing companies that would like to keep their employees is to find ways to enhance the workmates

relationships, as a way to maintain employee satisfaction. Supervisors must be aware of the relationships between employees, in order to resolve any problems in a timely manner.

These recommendations are given in order to meet O'Toole and Lawler's (2006) definition of a good job, that is defined as one that satisfies the fundamental needs of having the basic economic resources and security to live good lives; the need to do meaningful work; the opportunity to grow and develop as a person; and the need for supportive social relationships.

Contracted security officer's companies that currently are fulfilling these basic needs contribute to retaining their employees; for the future they have to be aware not only of maintaining but increasing these practices, if they want to be great work places. This awareness could be obtained by being close to their employees and listening to their needs and desires.

As I stated, these recommendations arose from the results of my study and my own expertise, but they could not be generalized to the whole industry of contracted security officers' industry as there are limitations that are discussed below and that provide some lines of future research.

### **Limitations of this Study**

This study was performed with contracted security officers from four companies in Monterrey Mexico. Therefore, the first limitation is related to the number and placement of companies that participated. It would be necessary in order to achieve more generalizable results to include more companies in the research, as the companies selected for this study took advantage of the

researcher's network. Another important issue is that, for further studies, it may be advisable to include companies not only within this network, but a more ample sample of them. In this study the researcher decided to include companies that were operating legally in Monterrey, hence the results are related to a reduced set of companies. A greater geographical dispersion of companies would aid the generalizability of the findings.

Furthermore, only males participated in this research. The presence of female subjects, in further studies, could be a determining factor that leads to more accurate results. Women security officers are growing in number, and they may have different reasons for remaining employed with their companies.

It is my hope that, in the near future, more people could become interested in exploring this fascinating field, and that life allows me the opportunity to continue exploring it myself, in order to better the security officer's working conditions and help them grow as human beings, while they are taking care of our lives and assets. Therefore in the next section I present what I consider could be some future lines of further research.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The contracted security officer's field of research is an under explored one. This study focused on retention and was performed with security officers that have more than a year working in legal companies in Monterrey. Future lines of research could focus on individuals with lower tenure or individuals working in illegal companies. The research could be expanded to other locations in Mexico,

in order to learn more about what they experience in their companies, and make a comparison to obtain more generalizable results.

The security officer's job satisfaction and organizational commitment represent some potential of research in order to obtain deeper insights as how these constructs are represented in companies.

### **Final Comments**

In our current world, where technology is increasing its presence in the security and protection fields the human factor continues to be an important part of this industry, and unfortunately sometimes its importance is reduced or ignored.

This study was dedicated to explore an important part of this human factor: the security officer. This position, that in some cases is considered a second class job and is not fully appreciated by people, is nevertheless essential for the success and wellbeing of organizations and their employees around the world.

Security officers are human beings that have needs and desires in their lives, as we all do. They deserve a great amount of respect from their companies, the clients and the public in general, for the service they provide. They find joy and motivation in getting this respect. For that reason, I kindly ask the readers of this work that wherever they see a security officer, instead of demeaning her/him, they think of the human being that is working to protect them, and show their respect and recognition by a simple greeting or thanking

them. These small acts motivate them to work harder in benefit and service of others.

Having no more to say, I would like to express my gratitude to all the contracted security officers that work around the world, but especially to those Mexican individuals, who in spite of the security crisis that the country is going through, continue working to protect the lives and assets of others.

Also, I would like to express my deepest recognition and best wishes to the eight security officers that accepted to participate in my study. I hope that their words will be heard by many employers who have the power and desire to make their workplaces hard to leave. Learning to listen and take into account the needs of others, all of us as citizens of the world, could build better and more sustainable workplaces, and in turn make this a better planet to live on, for us and for the upcoming generations.

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## APPENDIX A

### Companies' Invitation

Dear [Owner or CEO of company],

As you know, I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, currently in the process of writing my doctoral dissertation, consists of an exploratory study about the factors that contribute to security officer's permanence in a company, for more than a year. In this project I am working under tutorage of [Chair Person], Adjunt Faculty EDOC Program at Pepperdine University, who can be contacted through the following e-mail address: or at [phone number]. The objective of this work is to obtain information regarding the factors that influence a security officers' decision to remain in their companies for more than a year. Until now, there has been no formal research done in the matter, and we only have guesses or empirical information about this issue.

The benefit that we could obtain from this project is to know with more accuracy the satisfactory elements found by security officers, in order to take or preserve the necessary actions to increase their time of permanence in their companies.

To carry on this project I will need to collect information from security officers of legal companies established in Monterrey, which have at least 5 years of establishment and have more than 50 security officers employed. For this reason, I have selected your company.

It is my intention to converse with security officers, who do not have the responsibility to supervise others (Shift or client's Premises Supervisors). I plan

to collect information by means of semi-structured interviews, which means that my role as the interviewer will be to lead conversations to those topics or satisfactory elements that the security officers have found in their companies, and have made them continue to work there for more than a year. For instance, the conversations could start with a question like the following: During the time that you have been working in your company, what have you liked the most? And from there the conversation would continue.

The estimated time for each interview would be about two hours and they will take place either in my personal office or in a public place, whichever best accommodates the interviewee. Interviews will be tape recorded so the rhythm of conversation can be more fluid.

Please be advised that the conclusions of the study would be shared with you in an aggregated format, not showing any information on either the identity of subjects that participated or of the companies where they work. I will not disclose the individual information provided by any of the participants because protection and respect for individual information is an exigency in these studies. This also means that I will not be able to tell you if any of your employees decided to be part of the study.

If your company decides to participate in this project, I will ask for a list of all security officers that work for your company and do not have a supervising position. This list must include name, tenure, and absences during the last year, and home, work, or e-mail address.

I remind you that participation must be strictly voluntary, which is why I should contact the security officers directly, and will appreciate if you do not make any mention of the study to your employees. This way they will not feel obligated to participate.

In order to continue with this project, I ask that you send me an e-mail stating that you would like to participate and that you agree with all the conditions of the study.

Regards,

Gerardo de los Santos

## APPENDIX B

### Security Officer's Invitation

Hello,

My name is Gerardo de los Santos, I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, currently working on my doctoral dissertation. In this project I am under the guidance of [Chairperson], Adjunct Faculty of the EDOC Program who can be contacted, in Spanish, at the following e-mail address: or at [phone number].

The subject that I am developing in my dissertation is related to the factors that contracted security officers find in their companies that have made them stay for more than a year.

The objective that I want to reach with this Project is to obtain firsthand information, through some security officers, about the factors that influence security officer's decision to remain in their companies for more than a year. That information could be useful for security companies to make decisions that enhance the quality of the position, and will benefit society by providing better security officers to protect assets and lives.

To collect this information I will interview security officers of several companies in Monterrey, who have been selected because they have more than one year tenure, a good attendance record, and no responsibility supervising others.

You meet the criteria to participate in this study, and for that reason I want to cordially invite you to be a part of it.

The interviews mentioned before, will last two hours maximum, and will be carried out like a conversation, in my personal office or in a public place like a park depending which is better for you. In the interviews I will inquire about the factors that have influenced your decision to remain with your company for more than a year. Therefore, you do not have to worry about answers being right or wrong because every comment will be useful for the study.

Conversations are going to be tape recorded in order to save time and maintain continuity, which the taking of written notes could impede. The recordings will be kept in a secure place and 3 years after the study is finished, they will be destroyed.

You may consider that there is a possible risk related to your job security, if interview content is disclosed to your employer, or if you are connected with specific responses. Please know that the risk of this happening is low, because the individual information collected in the interviews will be strictly confidential and under no circumstance it will be given to the company where you work or to any other person. When the study is finished, the results will be shared through an aggregated report where neither the name of the participants or their companies will be mentioned.

Also, there is no risk for you if you choose not to participate in the study because there are no monies, contracts, or other agreements made that will benefit any of the parties involved.

If during the interviews, you feel that some questions are very personal or produce memories of uncomfortable experiences, you are not going to be forced to share them.

In case that you voluntarily want to participate, please contact me by using any of the means described below and that time we could schedule the interview.

You may reach me by email in; by phone at [phone number].

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB) at [phone number].

I appreciate the time you dedicated to reading this and hope have your valuable participation.

## APPENDIX C

### Issues to be Explored in the Semi-structured Interviews

The following list presents the issues that emerged from the literature research and need to be explored during the interviews. The description indicates the scope and coverage of each issue.

Decision making: Refers to the way that decisions at daily work are made, and who supports the security officer when a decision is made. Also covers aspects of how new ideas or suggestions to enhance the post, the position, the company are listened to or considered.

Work group: Refers to the workmates and their relationships including personnel from the client or the company's office. In general, all people that have a work related relationship with the security officer. In Mexican culture the relationships among coworkers are important.

Conflict management: Refers to the moment when a decision regarding a conflict of interests has to be made. This conflict could be among coworkers, company's personnel, or client's employees; also refers to conflicts in work related issues.

Power and Politics: Refers to the way that the security officer reacts to the use of power and authority both from clients and coworkers. Mexican workers are more accepting of power-distance; they recognize the power and authority given by positions, tenure and organizational structure.

Organizational culture: Refers to the company's way of thinking and solving problems. Also, how it deals with recognition from superiors and peers. This issue includes organizational citizenship.

Payment and Benefits: Refers to the economic rewards that security officers get as wages, bonuses, and benefits.

Growing Opportunities: refers to the opportunities that a security officer could have in her/his company to get a better position, a better economic reward and a better workplace regarding schedules, facilities, commuting time and so on.

Supervisor: refers to the treatment that a security officer receives from the supervisor. Includes mentoring, being listened to, support in dealings with the client and the company's office, and all issues related to the relationship boss-subordinate. In Mexican culture the supervisor is an important part of workers' life.

Balance between work and personal life: refers to the balance between personal life and work, meaning the time spent in working and personal activities, including commuting time, hobbies, and other personal and community activities, also the family's opinion about the job and company. Mexican workers are collectivist; they are committed to family and friends first.

Stress: refers to personal stress and the one generated by job and work related activities.

Meaning: refers to the meaning that security officers find in their jobs, and the self-esteem that they find in their position and relationships.

Job security: refers to the security that the security officer finds in the permanence of working in their current companies. Mexican workers prefer known rather than unknown future outcomes.



Organizational Commitment: refers to the type of commitment that the security officers feel to their companies.

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Protocol

#### Opening of the Interview

- 1.-Hello, my name is Gerardo de los Santos. I am a doctoral student of the Program In Organization Change offered by Pepperdine University. This study is motivated by my interest in gaining a better understanding about the reasons why contracted security officers remain with their employing company for more than a year. In addition this study will help me to complete the requirements for obtaining my doctoral degree in organization change. Thank you for being here and accepting to participate in the study.
- 2.-The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that influence security officer's decision to remain in their companies for more than a year. The result of this study will help to enhance the working conditions of the position, and will help society to have better security officers to protect their assets and lives.
- This study has a qualitative nature and the research methods that I will use consist in interviews, through which I will invite you to respond some open ended questions.
- 3.-This interview will last approximately two hours.
- 4.-I want to remind you that your participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw from the research process in any time. Also, you have the right to not answering any question that you do not like to.
- 5.-I want to confirm to you that your identity and the identity of your company will not be disclosed at any time during and after the study.
- 6.-I want to make sure that you know and accept that your responses will be audio taped, so it is required that you use a microphone and speak clearly and with an appropriate volume. In addition I will be taking notes during the interview.
- 7.-Also I want you to carefully read the informed consent form and if you agree and accept all its terms and conditions, sign it.
- 8.-Thank you very much for accepting to participate in this study.
- 9.-Do you have a question before proceeding?
- 10.-Can we start the interview?

#### Interviewee Demographics

Age\_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Economical dependents \_\_\_\_\_

Years of education \_\_\_\_\_

Time working as a security officer \_\_\_\_\_

Time working with the company \_\_\_\_\_

What does your family think about your current job?

### Interview Questions

○Can you tell me about a time when you have felt especially satisfied in your company? (The following questions will be used only if the interviewee does not share a complete description of the story: (a) What happened?, (b) When did it happen? (c) Who was involved? (d) What did you do? (e) What values were involved in the story? (f) Why was that experience was important for you? (g) What did you learn about your company? (h) What is the underlying theme of this story?

○How does your current job match with your personal life and interests?

○What is your expected vision of a future position in your company?

○How do you think your current job contributes to the welfare of yourself, your company, the client?

○What do you like the most about your company?

○What do you like the most about your current working place?

○What do you like the most about your workmates?

○What do you like the most about your supervisor?

○If you have any conflict at work, how is it solved?

○Do you feel that your job is stressful? Why?

○What did you become aware of during this interview?

○For what reasons did you accept to participate in this study?

### Closing the interview

○Is there anything else you would like to add before closing this interview?

○How are you feeling now?

Once again, thank you for your time and your participation.

## APPENDIX E

### Probing and Follow up Questions

The following list presents a set of probing and/or follow-up questions to the interview protocol's questions. These questions were developed as a means to support the researcher to get more accurate information about the matter under study. Some of these probing questions may be used during the interview depending on the answers to the main questions.

#### Decision making:

- How do you make a decision at work?
- If you give a suggestion about your work are you listened?
- Have you ever suggested something to improve your work that has been implemented?
- If you have a special problem at work, who do you call?
- If you make a decision, do you feel supported, by whom?
- Do you receive some reward when you suggest something valuable?

#### Work group:

- In your work, with whom do you relate?
- How are your relationships with your work mates?
- The person that I most trust in my work is....
- The person that I most trust in my company is....
- In case of an emergency or a special problem that needs the participation of other security officers, how do you think they will react?
- In case of a special personal need, who do you call?
- How are you treated by your company's personnel?
- Do you think your work mates care about you? Why?
- Do you think your company's personnel care about you? Why?
- Do you feel like the client thinks that you are important? Why?
- Do you feel like a part of the client's employees? Why?
- Which do you consider your first responsibility, representing the client, or your company?

#### Conflict management:

- If you and one of your workmates have a problem, what do you do to solve it? Do you call someone else who?
- What do you think she/he will do?
- If you have a problem with the client's personnel, what do you do?
- If something goes wrong between you and the client, what do you do?
- Do you think your supervisor will support you, if you are right? And, if you are wrong?

- Who do you think is first for your company, you or the contract?

Power and politics:

- Have you ever felt that you had been mistreated or alienated? By whom?
- Have you ever felt that the boss preferred someone?
- Who is the most respectable person in your company?

Organizational culture:

- What is the idea about security officers in your company?
- What do you think is first for your company; earn money or the benefit of security officers? Why?
- When you have some issue with the company, who do you call? Do they respond fast? Are they willing to help you?
- Who do you consider the best people in your company, do not tell me the names just tell me why you think that...
- How are you trained?
- Do you think that your company cares about your family's well-being?

Payment and benefits:

- Are you always paid on time?
- Which benefits do you have in your company?
- Which of them do you consider the best?
- Is there any case when your company has helped you to solve a personal economic issue?

Growing opportunities:

- Do you think it is possible to grow in your company? Why?
- What do you expect?
- Do you think there is a fair treatment about growing?
- How are growing opportunities handled? Assigned?
- Is there any difference from when you started working, with today?
- Are you clear on what do you have to do to grow?
- How are posts assigned?

Supervisor:

- Currently, how many supervisors do you have?
- How is your relationship with them?
- If you were a supervisor, how would you be?
- Do you consider your supervisor your friend?
- Do you feel like she/he really cares for you as a person? Why?
- Is there any case where your supervisor has helped to overcome a personal issue?

Balance between work and personal life:

- Describe a common day.
- How long does it take you to get to work?
- How many hours do you work per day, per week?
- How many days do you have off in a week?
- What do you do in a day off?
- What does your family think about your job?
- Would you like it if a son, brother or a close friend worked in your company?
- What do you think about your working shifts? Do you like them? Why?
- Do you have any hobbies, which? And when do you do them?
- Do you have another job? Which? When do you perform it?

Stress:

- Do you find your job stressful?
- What does your company do to reduce your job related stress?
- What do your supervisors do to reduce your job related stress?
- What do you do to reduce your personal and job related stress?
- What stresses you the most as a person, and as a security officer?

Meaning:

- Why do you think your job is important?
- What is the best part of your job?
- What makes you feel proud about your job?
- Do you think someone else could perform your job better than you?

Organizational commitment:

- Which of the three statements is more accurate for you?
1. I like to work in my company
  2. I need to work in my company
  3. I ought to work in my company

Explain the answer.

## APPENDIX F

### Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: Gerardo de los Santos Lozano

Title of Project: An Exploratory Study of Employee Retention: Factors that Influence Contracted Security Officer's Decision to Remain with their Companies for More than a Year

1. - I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research study under the direction of Gerardo de los Santos Lozano and under the supervision of [Chairperson]

I understand that while the study will be done by Gerardo de los Santos Lozano under the supervision of [Chairperson], other colleagues who work with the researcher may participate in data analysis, with the explicit agreement to adhere to subject protection guidelines.

2. - The overall purpose of the research is: explore the factors that contracted security officer's find in their companies that make them stay working for their companies for more than a year.

3. - My participation will involve the following:

- I will agree to be one of the ten to twelve research subjects who will participate in the study.
- I will respond to questions presented by the researcher based on my experiences and perceptions.
- I will be free to decline responding to any question to which I do not have an answer, or to which I do not feel comfortable expressing a response.
- I may stop this interview at any moment I desire.
- I will be free to ask any questions I might have regarding the study.

- I will decide whether it is acceptable for me to have this interview recorded. If I do not agree to this, the recorder will be turned off and the researcher will make written notes.
- 4. My active participation in the study will last for the duration of the interview, approximately two hours. The study shall be conducted in a location of my choosing.
- 5. I understand and accept that my responses will be audio taped by the researcher, so I will use a microphone and a recording device and I have to speak clearly with an appropriate volume.
- 6. I understand and accept that the recorded interviews are going to be transcribed by the researcher.

7. I understand that the possible benefits to myself or society from this research are:

Help the contracted security officers companies to know the reasons why the security officers stay working with them for more than a year, with this the companies could make the best decisions to enhance the position. Society will benefit from having better security officers to protect assets and lives.

8. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include:

a) Questions that might be very personal and produce memories of uncomfortable or painful experiences; however, I will not be forced to share these experiences or memories.

b) The risk that the information given in the interviews will be disclosed to my employer, which is minimized by the measures the researcher will take to protect confidentiality.

9. I understand that my estimated expected recovery time after the interview will be minimum, because the researcher will respect the agreed time and will suspend the interview if I wish to do so.



10. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

11. I understand that the investigator will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. Neither my name nor the name of my place of work will appear in any written document nor be revealed to anyone.

12. I understand that the information I provide will be managed through a code that only the researcher will know. The information will be destroyed by the researcher after presenting and receiving approval of the dissertation. To assure confidentiality, the researcher will personally transcribe the written notes and/or recordings. All material will be maintained in a locked cabinet until the formal dissertation process ends. Afterwards, this material will be destroyed.

13. I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact [Chairperson] at [phone number] or at [e-mail address] if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact Graduate and Professional Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB) at [phone number and e-mail address].

14. I will be informed of any significant new findings developed during the course of my participation in this research which may have a bearing on my willingness to continue in the study.

15. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

Participant's SignatureDate:

---

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

Principal Investigator:Date:

---

## Appendix G

### Pepperdine University IRB Approval

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

May 13, 2011

Gerardo de los Santos Lozano

**Protocol #: E0111D17**

**Project Title: *An Exploratory Study of Employee Retention: Factors that Influence Contracted Security Officer's Decision to Remain with their Employers for more than a Year***

Dear Mr. de los Santos Lozano:

Thank you for submitting your revised IRB application, *An Exploratory Study of Employee Retention: Factors that Influence Contracted Security Officer's Decision to Remain with their Employers for more than a Year*, to Pepperdine's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB has reviewed your revised submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. As the nature of the research met the requirements for expedited review under provision Title 45 CFR 46.110 (research category 7) of the federal Protection of Human Subjects Act, the IRB conducted a formal, but expedited, review of your application materials.

I am pleased to inform you that your application for your study was granted **Full Approval**. The IRB approval begins today, **May 13, 2011** and terminates on **May 12, 2012**.

Please note that your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the GPS IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For **any** proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for expedited review and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB. If contact with subjects will extend beyond **May 12, 2012**, a **Continuation or Completion of Review Form** must be submitted at least **one month prior** to the expiration date of study approval to avoid a lapse in approval. These forms can be found on the IRB website at <http://services.pepperdine.edu/irb/irbforms/#Apps>.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, California 90045 ■



Jean Kang, CIP  
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Dr. Yuying Tsong, Interim Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB  
Ms. Jean Kang, Manager, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB  
Dr. Daphne dePorres  
Ms. Christie Dailo